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WHAT IS PRESBYTERIAN LAW

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THE CHURCH COURTS?

THIRD EDITION.

WITH AN APPENDIX

CONTAINING THE DECISIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLIES OF 1882 AND 1883.

BY THE
REV. J. ASPINWALL HODGE, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA:
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PREFACE.

THROUGHOUT my ministry of twenty-five years I have experienced the need of ready and authoritative answers to questions which constantly arise in Church work. As a young man, fresh from the seminary, I was embarrassed when suddenly made "the chief ruler," the Moderator of the Session. I was practically ignorant of its high duties, and was tempted to neglect them under the new and absorbing pressure of pulpit preparation. Questions of government and discipline were presented, and my opinions and the theories urged by others were useless. I needed to know how the Church had defined its constitution and applied its laws, and was thus led to record the interpretations and decisions of our highest judicatory. I soon found that Elders and Deacons, unexpectedly called to their responsible offices, gave their solemn assent to the constitution often after a very cursory reading, and were necessarily perplexed as to their duties. Candidates were frequently ordained when found "apt to teach," but unprepared "to rule" and "to take care of the Church of God." Communicants needed instruction as to the distinctive principles

of Presbyterianism, their own privileges and work in the Church and their relation to other denominations of Christians.

To meet these needs in my own congregation, I formed a class on Church Polity, and prepared questions on our "Form of Government" to help the members in their study. The interest excited and the good accomplished convinced me that all the officers and members of our churches would be greatly helped by authoritative answers to such questions. In this book I attempt to aid them, presenting, not my own views nor the theories of others, but PRESBYTERIAN LAW AS DEFINED BY THE CHURCH COURTS. Sound doctrine, the efficiency of officers, Christian activity and the maintenance of fellowship with other branches of Christ's Church, all depend very much upon a correct appreciation and proper use of our scriptural form of government; the principles of which have been developed and illustrated under both the Old and New Dispensations of the Church of God. Sabbath-school classes in Church Polity therefore would be a lasting spiritual edification to the whole Church; and more practical instruction in the theological seminaries and thorough examinations before Presbytery would secure a ministry better fitted to teach and to rule.

The real unity of the Church, as well as denominational courtesy, requires the recognition of the ministry, ordinances and discipline of other branches of the Christian

Church. Christ brings all his worshipers into frequent ecclesiastical and personal relations for mutual improvement, and in anticipation of the perfect communion to be enjoyed hereafter. I have therefore stated the principal peculiarities of other churches, as far as possible, in the words of their acknowledged standards.

I trust that this book may help to make us more loyal and efficient as Presbyterians, and more sympathetic with the whole body of Christ.

J. ASPINWALL HODGE.

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT,
January, 1882.

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INTRODUCTORY.

What is the Church?

"The invisible Church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the Head." "The visible Church is a society made up of all such as in all ages and places of the world do profess the true religion, and of their children."*

What is the present condition of the visible Church?

It is composed of various denominations, or churches, which, while holding to Christ the Head, and receiving the Scriptures as the inspired revelation of his truth and will, are distinguished from each other by their creeds, forms of worship and polities.

What are the principal kinds of church government?

1. The Papal. Its characteristics are, "a vicar of Christ, a perpetual college of Apostles, and the people subject to their infallible control."

2. The Prelatical, which teaches "the perpetuity of the apostleship as the governing power in the Church, which therefore consists of those who profess the true religion and are subject to apostle-bishops." Its Low Church form asserts that "there was originally a threefold order in the ministry, and that there should be now.

* *Larger Catechism*, Qq. 62 and 64.

But it does not affirm that mode of organization to be essential."

3. The Independent, which holds that "the governing and executive power in the Church is in the brotherhood," and "that the church organization is complete in each worshiping assembly, which is independent of every other." *

4. The Congregational, which maintains that "all ecclesiastical power resides in the church, or the associated body of the brethren," and that the churches, which "live in close fraternal union, are associated together in bodies, and often ask and receive advice and help from each other; but all this is the result of mutual confidence and affection, not of any superior power." The independence of the churches is claimed in the right of each to choose its own officers, determine its creed, judge its members and formulate its worship. The community of the churches is expressed in Councils, called in emergencies, and which have only advisory power.†

5. The Presbyterian, which holds that "the people have a right to a substantive part in the government of the Church," by representatives generally called Ruling Elders; that "the Presbyters who minister in word and doctrine are the highest permanent officers of the Church, and all belong to the same order;" and that "the outward and visible Church is, or should be, one, in the sense that a smaller part is subject to a larger, and a larger to the whole," as in courts of appeal.‡

What portions of the Reformed Church are Presbyterian?

The Protestant churches of France, Holland, Germany,

* *What is Presbyterianism*, pp. 5, 6.

† *Congregational Manual*, pp. 6–11.

‡ *What is Presbyterianism*, pp. 6, 7.

Switzerland, Scotland, Ireland and portions of the dissenting churches of England, and those in this country and Canada planted by them.* This list is very imperfect, as may be seen in the list of churches in the Presbyterian Alliance. To it should be added the Presbyterian Church of Wales, Mission Church of Belgium, Waldensian Church of Italy, Reformed Church of East Friesland, Evangelical Church of Spain, the Reformed churches of Bohemia and Moravia, in the Netherlands, in Russia, the Free Italian Church, Reformed Dutch Church in Cape Colony, in Orange Free State, in Natal, in South Africa, in Australia, in New Zealand, in Otago, in Ceylon and in New Hebrides.† To this list should be added also the various mission churches established in heathen lands.

Did Presbyterianism originate with the Reformers?

The three great principles of Presbyterianism—viz. government by Elders, the parity of the ministry and courts of appeals—have always been recognized in the Church of God. (See Ex. 3 : 16; 18 : 25, 26; Num. 11 : 16.) For the ceremonial services (which were typical and temporary) there were Priests of various orders. But the teaching Elders, or Scribes, or Doctors of the law, were of the same order. The Apostles, who were extraordinary and temporary officers,‡ ordained Elders in every church, and in their Epistles distinguished between those who "rule well" and those who "labor in word and doctrine" (Acts 15 : 25; 1 Tim. 5 : 17). The most ancient churches still extant, or of whose government we have information, were Presbyterian; as the

* *Miller on Presbyterianism*, p. 20.

† *Report of Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance*, pp. 5, 9. ‡ See p. 42.

Waldensian and Bohemian churches, the Syrian in the far East, the ancient British churches, and the Culdee Church in Iona, Scotland, which land had received Christianity, according to Tertullian and Baronius, before the death of John. These churches claim to have received their form of government from the Apostles' teaching and practice. Calvin and the other Reformers derived their principles of polity and discipline from the Scriptures, and from these ancient churches.*

What is the earliest record of a Presbytery in England?

In 1572 a Presbytery was formed at Wandsworth, near London. In 1574, T. Cartwright republished Travers' work under the title, "A full and Plaine Declaration of Ecclesiastical Discipline out of the Word of God." In 1584 a national Synod in London revised a book which was called the "Holy Discipline," and which before 1590 was subscribed by five hundred Ministers in England.†

What book of polity was adopted by the Church of Scotland at the Reformation?

"Previous to the legal establishment of the Protestant religion in 1560, the 'Book of Common Order,' used by the English church at Geneva, was generally followed as the rule of worship and discipline by the Scotch Reformers; but that being found inadequate to the regulation of a Church consisting of numerous congregations, a 'Book of Discipline' adapted to the state of the Church was soon after that event urged upon Parliament," but it dissolved without action. The same year a "Book of Policy," or "First Book of Discipline," was approved by the Gen-

* *Name, Nature and Function of Ruling Elder*, p. 78; *The Culdee Church*, pp. 33–51 and 65–72; *Miller on Presbyterianism*, pp. 9–22; *Primitive Church Offices*, pp. 1–67.

† *Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 23.

eral Assembly. This, while sanctioned by the Church, was never formally approved by the civil authorities. "The Second Book of Discipline" was adopted by the General Assembly in 1578; and according to it the church government was established in 1592.*

When did the Westminster Assembly of Divines meet?

This Assembly of Ministers and laymen met by order of Parliament July 1, 1643, and closed February 22, 1649. Its sessions were in the Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey. Great dissatisfaction had been caused by the introduction of new ceremonies, the enforcement of the "Book of Sunday Sports," the expulsion of Puritan clergy, and the effort to force the Episcopal liturgy upon the Scottish churches. This Assembly was called "to be consulted with by Parliament for settling of the government and the liturgy of the Church of England, and for the vindication of the doctrine of the said Church from false aspersions and interpretations." In October of the same year Parliament ordered the members to "confer and treat among themselves of such discipline and government as may be most agreeable to God's holy word, etc., to be settled in this Church, in stead and place of the present church government by Archbishops, Bishops, etc., which is resolved to be taken away, and touching and concerning the directory of worship, or liturgy, hereafter to be in the Church." The Assembly had no ecclesiastical authority, but was to confer with Parliament on these subjects. Of those appointed members of the Assembly, twenty were Ministers of the Church of England; many of these were prevented from taking their seats by a proclamation from the king forbidding the meeting of the Assembly. At the open-

* *The Church of God*, by Stuart Robinson, Appendix, pp. iv., xvii.

ing there were sixty-nine Ministers present. Most of these were Presbyterians, ten were Independents and six were Erastians (holding that the Church is subordinate to the State). The whole number of delegates was one hundred and twenty Ministers and thirty laymen. In 1644 the Assembly submitted to Parliament "The Directory for Public Worship;" in 1646, "The Confession of Faith." In 1647 the Assembly sent to the House of Commons "The Larger Catechism," and the same year "The Shorter Catechism." These were adopted immediately by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. In England the "Directory for Public Worship" and the "Confession of Faith" were ratified by Parliament. These, with the Assembly's Catechism, became the standards of the English and of the Irish Presbyterian churches, but the restoration of the Stuarts re-established Episcopacy in its former authority in England.*

What was the earliest Presbyterian church in America?

This is uncertain. The first Presbyterian church of New York was planted by the Reformed Church of Holland in 1628. Rev. James M. Macdonald claimed that the Presbyterian church of Jamaica, L. I., was "the oldest Presbyterian church established by the English in America." It was organized in 1672.† Dr. Gillett grants that this is "more than possible." The Rev. Francis Makemie organized a church at Rehoboth, Somerset co., Md. "All the circumstances point to the establishment of that church from 1684 to 1686." There were at least three

* *American Cyclopædia. Constitutional History of Presbyterian Church*, pp. 23–26.

† *Two Centuries in the History of the Presbyterian Church, Jamaica*, pp. 57, 76.

churches in Maryland in 1691: at Rehoboth, Makemie Pastor; at Snow Hill, S. Davis Pastor; and at Princess Ann, T. Wilson Pastor. Records have been recently discovered "incidentally showing the establishment of the church in Maryland to have been the first upon this continent." *

According to Dr. Gillett, the Presbyterian church at Snow Hill, Md., organized in 1684 by Makemie, was the first church of our order in the country. But he adds, "It is probable, indeed, that other Presbyterian congregations had been gathered before this in other localities." † The church of Snow Hill was "founded by Makemie after he had established the church at Rehoboth." ‡ Four others in that State date nearly as far back. Those in Freehold and Woodbridge, in New Jersey, were established in 1692. The first church formed in Philadelphia was in 1698. Presbyterian churches were planted very early in New Castle, Delaware, and in Charleston, South Carolina. § A large proportion of the Puritans who settled New England were Presbyterians, but the first-comers were Congregationalists, and with these the Presbyterians identified themselves. Presbyterian churches were, however, early planted in New England. The first, probably, was in 1710 in Mansfield, Connecticut; its members were ruled by eight Elders; its first Minister continued in his pastorate over thirty-one years. In 1741 a Presbyterian church was organized at Milford, Connecticut, and was connected with the Presbytery of

* *Second General Council Presbyterian Alliance*, p. 800.

† *Gillett's History of the Presbyterian Church*, i., pp. 4, 5.

‡ *Second General Council Presbyterian Alliance*, p. 801.

§ *Sprague's Annals*, vol. iii., Introduction.

New Brunswick.* Besides these there was a French Presbyterian church in Boston, Massachusetts, formed by Huguenots in 1687.†

Which was the first Presbytery organized in America?

The Presbytery of Philadelphia, which was organized probably early in 1704. The first page of the records is lost. The book begins with a fragment of the minutes of a meeting of the Presbytery held at Freehold, New Jersey, December 26, 1706. It consisted of seven Ministers, and was called to examine, and to hear the trial-pieces of, Mr. John Boyd; and on the next Lord's Day, December 29th, the Presbytery ordained him "in the public meeting-house of this place, before a numerous assembly."‡ In 1718 a large number of Presbyterians, with four Ministers, came to New England from the north of Ireland. The Ministers and Elders assembled as often as possible, yet somewhat informally. In cases of difficulty they sought advice from the Synod of Ireland. This informal Presbytery continued until 1745, when it was regularly organized as the Boston Presbytery. It consisted at first of six Ministers.§

When was the first Synod held?

In September, 1716, the Presbytery declared that "it having pleased Divine Providence so to increase our number as that, after much deliberation, we judge it may be more serviceable to the interest of religion to divide ourselves into subordinate meetings or Presbyteries, constituting one annually, as a Synod, to meet at Philadelphia or elsewhere, to consist of all the members

* *Sprague's Annals*, vol. iii., Introduction.

† *Connecticut Historical Collections*, pp. 234, 552.

‡ *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 9.

§ *Sprague's Annals*, vol. iii., Introduction.

of each subordinate Presbytery or meeting for this year at least; therefore it is agreed by the Presbytery, after serious deliberation, that the first subordinate meeting or Presbytery, to meet at Philadelphia or elsewhere as they shall see fit, do consist of these following members" (six Ministers). "And the second, to meet at New Castle" (consisting of six Ministers). "And the third, to meet at Snow Hill" (of three Ministers). And the Ministers on Long Island were urged to use their best endeavors with brethren settled there to join in forming a fourth Presbytery. The Synod was called the Synod of Philadelphia.*

When was the first General Assembly held?

In 1788 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia unanimously resolved to divide itself into four Synods —viz. the Synod of New York and New Jersey, the Synod of Philadelphia, the Synod of Virginia and the Synod of the Carolinas; and "that the first meeting of the General Assembly, to be constituted out of the above said four Synods, be held, and it is hereby appointed to be held, on the third Thursday of May, 1789, in the Second Presbyterian Church in the city of Philadelphia, at eleven o'clock A. M., and that Dr. Witherspoon, or in his absence Dr. Rodgers, open the General Assembly with a sermon, and preside until a Moderator be chosen." The former of these Ministers preached and presided during the organization, and the latter was then elected the first regular Moderator.†

When were the Westminster Standards adopted?

In 1729 the Synod of Philadelphia, the original Synod and the supreme court of the Church, adopted the "Confession of Faith" and the "Larger and Shorter Catechisms"

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 45.

† *Ibid.*, p. 547; *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 280, 854.

of the Westminster Assembly, and agreed that all its members, present and future, shall declare their agreement in and approbation of these standards, "as being, in all the essential and necessary articles, good forms of sound words and systems of Christian doctrine," and shall also adopt them as the confession of their faith. The same day all the members of Synod complied with this order, personally adopting these standards, except one Minister, who gave in his adherence the next year.

The Synod further declared that "they judge the 'Directory for Worship, Discipline and Government of the Church,' commonly annexed to the Westminster Confession, to be agreeable in substance to the word of God, and founded thereon, and therefore do earnestly recommend the same to all their members, to be by them observed as near as circumstances will allow and Christian prudence direct."*

In this adopting act the Synod unanimously declared that they did not receive the clauses in the twentieth and twenty-third chapters "in any such sense as to suppose the civil magistrate hath a controlling power over Synods with respect to the exercise of their ministerial authority, or power to persecute any for their religion, or in any sense contrary to the Protestant succession to the throne of Great Britain." These articles, thus excepted to, were altered after the independence of the United States was established, and the Synod considered "the Church of Christ as a spiritual society entirely distinct from the civil government, having a right to regulate their own ecclesiastical policy, independently of the interposition of the magistrate."†

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 94, 95.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 50.

The language used in adopting the "Directory and Form of Church Government" was chosen "because we believe the general platform of our government to be agreeable to the Sacred Scriptures; but we do not believe that God has been pleased so to reveal and enjoin every minute circumstance of ecclesiastical government and discipline as not to leave room for orthodox churches of Christ, in these minutiæ, to differ with charity from one another."

The Synod, preparatory to forming the General Assembly, ordered a thorough revision of the standards, and a committee was appointed to digest a system of discipline and government adapted to the state of the Church in this country. The draught of the "Form of Government and Discipline" was adopted in 1788 as the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America, and it was ordered to be strictly observed as the rule of their proceedings by all the inferior judicatories. It was resolved, "that the 'Form of Government and Discipline' and the 'Confession' as now ratified is to continue to be our constitution and the confession of our faith and practice, unalterable unless two-thirds of the Presbyteries under the care of the General Assembly shall propose alterations or amendments, and such alterations or amendments shall be agreed to by the General Assembly."* At the same time the "Directory of Worship" was revised and approved and ratified. The "Larger" and "Shorter Catechisms," with a slight amendment to the "Larger," were also approved; and these, the "Confession of Faith," the "Catechisms," the "Form of Government and Discipline" and the "Directory of Worship," were declared to be "the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." The proof-texts and notes

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 56.

were afterward added, but were not made part of the constitution.*

When were these Standards revised and amended?

In 1804 and 1805 a revision was made, which resulted in some amendments "to explain, render more practicable and bring nearer to perfection the general system." In 1816 a committee was appointed to revise the constitution, and in 1820 the result of their labors was sent down to the Presbyteries, and was by them adopted, thus reducing the standards to their present form, modified only by various separate amendments from time to time made. The action of the Presbyteries was ratified by the General Assembly in 1821.† In 1878 a committee was appointed to revise the constitution. In 1880 they reported progress, presenting a revised "Book of Discipline," and in 1881 a second revision, which was referred back to be reported completed next year, and they were relieved of the work of revising the "Confession of Faith."‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 45–54.

† *Assembly's Digest*, p. 39. See p. 273. ‡ See p. 274.

THE

FORM OF GOVERNMENT

AND

FORMS OF PROCESS

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

AS AMENDED AND RATIFIED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN MAY, 1821.

BOOK I.

OF GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY PRINCIPLES.

When was this chapter drawn up?

With the exception of the first sentence, it was prepared by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia and prefixed to the "Form of Government" in 1788, as that body was about to divide itself into four Synods and give place to the General Assembly, which met the next year.* The war of the Revolution had closed, having secured the independence of the United States and produced changes in the relations of the Church to the State. This, together with the increase in numbers, led the Synod to perfect the organization of the Church, and

* *Form of Government*, ch. i., note.

made this declaration of preliminary principles timely and necessary.*

What was the object of declaring these principles?

"*This, it is hoped, will in some measure, prevent rash misconstructions and uncandid reflections, which usually proceed from an imperfect view of any subject; as well as make the several parts of the system plain, and the whole perspicuous and fully understood.*"

I. What is the first principle?

"*God alone is Lord of the conscience; and hath left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship.*" †

What is Christian liberty?

It is not license to "oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical," for that is resistance of the ordinances of God. Nor is it a right to hold and publish opinions "contrary to the light of nature or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship or conversation." Christian liberty is the unrestrained and entire submission to God as his will is made known in nature and revelation. Its end is "that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life." ‡

What is the right of private judgment?

The liberty and obligation, which belong to every man, of examining the word of God, and determining for himself its meaning. It is denied by the ritualists,

* *Sprague's Annals*, vol. iii., Introduction.

† *Confession of Faith*, ch. xx., sect. ii.; ch. xxi., sect. i.

‡ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xx.

who teach that "the chief officers of the Church, without regard to character, are the organs of the Spirit, and that all private Christians are bound to submit without hesitation to all their decisions." "But according to the Scriptures it is the duty of every Christian to try the spirits whether they be of God, to reject an Apostle, or an angel from heaven, should he deny the faith; and of that denial such Christian is of necessity the judge." * The right of private judgment is therefore a divine right, and must be considered, "*in all matters that respect religion, as universal and unalienable.*" No creed or polity should be enforced by the State: our Church does "*not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and, at the same time, be equal and common to all others.*"

What is the province of the civil government?

It has no right to impose or enforce any form of church polity, nor to grant any special countenance or support to any part of the Church. Its duty is to afford equal and common protection, that men may worship God according to their consciences.† "No principle has been better established in regard to this nation than the entire separation of the Church and the State; and the State has no more right to compel by taxation one of its citizens to contribute money to the building up and advancing of the Roman Catholic or any other denomination than it has to compel us to unite with their Church." ‡

II. What is the second principle?

"*Every Christian Church, or union or association of*

* *Church Polity*, pp. 37 and 406.

† See p. 18; *Church of God*, by Stuart Robinson, D. D., pp. 84–86; *Church Polity*, pp. 106–118; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 121.

‡ *Minutes of General Assembly 1878*, p. 55.

particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualifications of its Ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed." This principle is essential to all organizations. Men are at liberty to refuse to be connected with a society, but if they voluntarily enter, they must submit to its terms of admission and to its laws. So if any man's conscience will not permit him to concur with, or passively submit to, the standards of the Church, he "shall, after sufficient liberty modestly to reason and remonstrate, peaceably withdraw from our communion, without attempting to make any schism." Provided that which he cannot accept shall be judged by the Church to be indispensable to Presbyterian doctrine or polity.* This of course refers only to the officers of the Church, who are required to receive and adopt the standards of the Church.† But communicants are received on profession of faith in the Lord Jesus.‡

May the Church err in the exercise of this right?

Churches, "*in the exercise of this right, may, notwithstanding, err in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet even in this case they do not infringe upon the liberty or the rights of others, but only make an improper use of their own.*"

III. What is the third principle?

"*That our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible Church, which is his body, hath appointed officers, not only to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments,*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 48.

† *Form of Government*, chs. xiii. and xv.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. ix.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 307. See p. 135.

but also to exercise discipline for the preservation both of truth and duty."

What duties have the officers?

Those which were appointed by Christ—viz. "*to preach the gospel,*" "*administer the sacraments*" and "*exercise discipline.*" "*It is incumbent upon these officers and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous; observing, in all cases, the rules contained in the word of God.*" Their authority is therefore only declarative, announcing what Christ has revealed, and applying his law according to his direction.

IV. What is the fourth principle?

"*That truth is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness, according to our Saviour's rule, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'*"

What is the connection between truth and goodness?

Truth is the only source of goodness, and goodness is the fruit and test of truth. "*No opinion can be more pernicious or more absurd, than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level, and represents it as of no consequence what a man's opinions are.*" "*There is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise it would be of no consequence either to discover truth or to embrace it.*"

V. What is the fifth principle?

"*There are truths and forms, with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ.*" And in all these it is "*the duty, both of private Christians and societies, to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.*"

How is this mutual forbearance to be manifested?

By recognition of the Christian and church character

and relation of others (Mark 9 : 38–40; Rom. 14); by patiently teaching the way of the Lord more perfectly, and by maintaining and practicing the truth, but without offence and without judging others (Gal. 2 : 3–5, 11–14; Rom. 14 : 1–23; 1 Cor. 10 : 32; 2 Cor. 6 : 3; Matt. 7 : 1; James 4 : 11).

May persons be received into the communion of the Church who do not fully agree with the Standards of the Church?

All are to be received "who in the judgment of charity are the sincere disciples of Jesus Christ," making profession of their faith, love and obedience to him. They are received to be instructed in the doctrines of the Church.*

Must the officers be sound in faith?

"It is necessary to make effectual provision that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith." †

VI. What is the sixth principle?

"The election of persons to the exercise of this authority, in any particular society, is in that society."

What officers can be appointed in the church?

"The character, qualifications and authority of church officers, are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of their investiture and institution."

By whom are officers to be chosen?

The right of election belongs to those over whom the authority is to be exercised. Pastors, Ruling Elders and Deacons must be elected by the particular churches in which they hold office.‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 307; Rom. 14 : 1.

† *Form of Government*, chs. xiii., xiv. and xv.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 48, 307.

‡ *Form of Government*, chs. xiii., xiv., xv.

VII. What is the seventh principle?

"All church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or in the way of representation by delegated authority, is only ministerial and declarative."

What is meant by this?

"That the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws, to bind the conscience, in virtue of their own authority; and that all their decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God."

Whence comes the danger in the exercise of church power?

"All synods and councils may err, through the frailty inseparable from humanity; yet there is much greater danger from the usurped claim of making laws, than from the right of judging upon laws already made and common to to all who profess the gospel; although this right, as necessity requires in the present state, be lodged with fallible men."

VIII. What is the eighth principle?

"The vigor and strictness of its discipline will contribute to the glory and happiness of any Church."

How can this be shown?

"Since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects, it can derive no force whatever, but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public, and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the Church universal." It is not the exercise of human power, but the application of divine laws. It is enforced by appeal to the infallible word of God and to Christ the great Head of the Church. Its object is to secure to the Church sound doctrine, godly living, encouragement to the well-doing and correction to the erring.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE CHURCH.

I. Who established the Church on earth?

"*Jesus Christ, who is now exalted far above all principality and power, hath erected in this world a kingdom, which is his Church.*"

When was the Church established?

After the Fall, when the first promise of redemption was made (Gen. 3 : 15; 6 : 18). The Church, while passing through different dispensations, has been always the same, having had but one system of doctrines, more and more clearly revealed; one form of worship, becoming simpler and more spiritual as types and ceremonies accomplished their appointed office and ceased; and one form of government in its essential principles (Acts 7 : 38; Luke 1 : 68–79; Rev. 13 : 8; John 4 : 21–26; Ex. 3 : 15, 16; Num. 11 : 25; Acts 14 : 23).

The "Form of Government" adopted in 1879 by the (Southern) Presbyterian Church in the United States says, "The visible Church, before the law, under the law, and now under the gospel, is one and the same, and consists of all those who make profession of the true religion, together with their children." *

When was the Christian Church established?

After the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Holy Ghost (John 20 : 21, 22; Acts 1 : 8; 3 : 1–47).

Is Christ still the Head of his Church?

He is, and ever shall be (Eph. 1 : 20–22; Ps. 68 : 18; Dan. 7 : 14).

* *Book of Church Order*, ch. ii., sect. ii.

II. Of whom does the universal Church consist?

"Of all those persons, in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ and of submission to his laws."

Wherein consists the unity of the Church?

Not in outward organization, nor in allegiance to any visible head, but in union with Christ, belief in and profession of his religion, and submission to his authority (John 10 : 16; Eph. 4 : 1–16). "This visible unity of the body of Christ, though obscured, is not destroyed by its divisions into different denominations of professing Christians, but all of those which maintain the word and sacraments in their fundamental integrity are to be recognized as true branches of the Church of Jesus Christ." This is the declaration of the Southern Presbyterian Church.*

III. How can this universal Church worship?

"As this immense multitude cannot meet together in one place, to hold communion, or to worship God, it is reasonable and warranted by Scripture example, that they should be divided into many particular churches."

How is this warranted by Scripture?

God has so ordained under all dispensations. While sacrifices and the great feasts were observed only at Jerusalem, the people assembled every Sabbath day in their separate synagogues to worship and to be taught by their Elders. Christ's custom was to go into the synagogue every Sabbath, and the Apostles organized churches throughout Judæa, Syria and the whole Roman empire (Luke 4 : 16; Gal. 1 : 21, 22; John 4 : 23; Acts 15 : 21).

IV. What is a particular church?

"A particular church consists of a number of professing

* *Book of Church Order*, ch. ii., sect. ii.

Christians, with their offspring, voluntarily associated together, for divine worship and godly living, and submitting to a certain form of government."

What is the object of their association?

"*Worship*"—prayer and praise to God, and instruction from him—and "*godly living*" through mutual sympathy and helpfulness in the reception and application of the word of God.

What is necessary to the orderly accomplishment of this object?

"*Submitting to a certain form of government.*" It should be well devised, written and in the hands of all (Heb. 8 : 5; Gal. 6 : 16). Unwritten usage is uncertain and changeable, and causes confusion.

What is a particular Presbyterian church?

"A particular Presbyterian church, so far as adults are concerned, is constituted and organized, as such, by a number of individuals professing to walk together as the disciples of Jesus Christ, on the principles of the 'Confession of Faith' and 'Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church,' and the election and ordination of one or more Ruling Elders, who, by the ordination-service, become the spiritual rulers of the persons voluntarily submitting themselves to their authority in the Lord."*

How may a new church be formed?

Persons desiring to be associated as a church should draw up and sign a petition to Presbytery expressing their desire, the need of such an organization and the prospects of usefulness. They should appoint suitable persons to present and urge their petition before Presbytery. "The organization ought always to be made by

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 107.

application to the Presbytery within the bounds of which the church to be organized is found, unless this be exceedingly inconvenient, in which case it may be done by a duly-authorized Missionary or a neighboring Minister of the gospel" (1831).* Appendix, p. 519.

Is a Minister, ex-officio, authorized to organize churches without an order of Presbytery?

"Except in frontier and destitute settlements, where, by 'Form of Government,' ch. xv., sect. xv., it is made a part of the business of Evangelists to organize churches, and except in cases where it is exceedingly inconvenient to make application to a Presbytery (for which provision is made in the act of Assembly of 1831),* it is not the prerogative of a Minister of the gospel to organize churches without the previous action of some Presbytery directing or permitting it; since in 'Form of Government,' ch. x., sect. viii., to form new congregations is enumerated among the powers of the Presbytery, and since in ch. iv., 'Of Bishops or Pastors,' no mention is made of any such power being lodged in the hands of an individual Minister."† Appendix, pp. 519, 524.

Who should sign the petition?

All persons desiring the formation of the church. The petition should, however, state who are prepared to become members of the new church on certificate from other churches, and who on profession of faith, and who are ready to contribute to its support, that all the facts may be before Presbytery.

May the Presbytery refuse the petition?

It may. This is implied in the powers granted to Presbytery.‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 107. † *Ibid.*, p. 173.

‡ See *Form of Government*, ch. x., sect. viii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 173.

How is the organization effected?

On granting the petition the Presbytery should appoint a committee of Ministers and Elders to proceed to the place, and by due public notice call the petitioners together in some convenient place. A sermon is generally preached by the presiding Minister of the committee, and "after prayer for divine direction and blessing" the committee "should first receive from those persons desiring to be organized into the new church, if they have been communicants in other churches, letters of dismission and recommendation, and in the next place examine and admit to a profession of faith such persons as may offer themselves and may be judged suitable to be received on examination. If any of these persons admitted to a profession on examination have not been baptized, they should at this stage of the business be made subjects of Christian baptism." The individuals thus received "should now by some public act, such as rising, joining hands or subscribing a written statement, agree and covenant to walk together in a church relation according to the acknowledged doctrines and order of the Presbyterian Church."

"The next step is to proceed to the election and ordination of Ruling Elders and Deacons, in conformity with directions given on this subject in the 'Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church.'

"Deacons are to be elected and ordained in like manner as in the case of Ruling Elders."

These officers are elected by the communicants and ordained by the presiding Minister of the committee of Presbytery. The new church should be formally declared to be duly organized as "The ——— Church of

——— place, under the care of ——— Presbytery." The name is to be chosen by the communicants. The whole service should be closed with prayer and the benediction.

The committee should report at the next meeting of Presbytery, and on motion the name of the church should be enrolled.*

The (Southern) Presbyterian Church directs that "these persons should . . . be required to enter into covenant by answering the following questions affirmatively with uplifted hand—viz.: 'Do you, in reliance on God for strength, solemnly promise and covenant that you will walk together as an organized church on the principles of the faith and order of the Presbyterian Church, and that you will study the purity and harmony of the whole body?' The presiding Minister shall then say, 'I now pronounce and declare that you are constituted a church according to the word of God and the faith and order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." †

May a church be formed beyond the bounds of Presbyteries?

This is part of the work of an Evangelist "in frontier and destitute settlements." ‡ It is his duty, however, "as soon as practicable to report to some Presbytery, with which it may be most naturally and conveniently connected, the time and manner of its organization, and desire to be received under the care of said Presbytery." § Appendix, p. 519.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 107, 108.

† *Book of Church Order*, ch. ii., sect. v.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. xv.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 108. See page 31.

May a church be formed without the presence of a Minister?

As the power to ordain belongs only to Ministers,* a full organization is impossible without the presence of a Minister. But a Presbyterian congregation may be formed by those desiring to be associated for worship. They should as soon as possible apply to the nearest Presbytery for recognition and full organization, and should make provision for regular services.†

What should be done when suitable persons cannot be found to be chosen as Ruling Elders?

"The people may, and ought to, obtain a preacher of the gospel to labor among them, and occasionally to administer ordinances, under the direction of some Presbytery," until they can "make a proper choice of Ruling Elders" and "have them regularly set apart to their office." †

What is an imperfectly-organized church?

An organized church, therefore, has recognized communicants and ordained officers. Under the Plan of Union‡ many churches were formed without ordained Elders. They had standing committees, which to some extent performed the duties of a Session. The "committee-men" were permitted to represent their churches in the higher courts until 1837, when the Plan of Union was abrogated. They continued, however, to be recognized by the N. S. Assembly. One of the terms of reunion was, "that imperfectly-organized churches were to become thoroughly Presbyterian within five years."§ In 1880 the Assembly received an overture asking that

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. iv.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 108.
‡ See p. 261. § See p. 264.

the Presbyteries be enjoined "to institute immediate and efficient measures whereby the churches, which at the reunion of the O. S. and N. S. were imperfectly organized by being governed by committee-men or unordained men, may fully and speedily complete their organization." The Assembly, however, expressed confidence in the loyalty, diligence and discretion of the Presbyteries, and referred the matter to their attention.* In 1881, referring to this action, the Assembly declared that it had "no official information as to the non-compliance, by any of the churches here referred to, with the Concurrent Declarations. As, however, the term for such imperfectly-organized churches to become thoroughly Presbyterian has long since passed, the Assembly feels compelled to remind, in this particular, any and all delinquent churches of their duty, and to express its conviction that, in the adoption of this Concurrent Declaration by the Assemblies of 1869, both bodies are solemnly bound to obey it." †

May the Presbytery recognize an unorganized congregation?

Yes. Even when refusing to erect the petitioners into a congregation, it may recognize them as such, and grant them supplies for their pulpit.‡

What is a congregation?

In our "Form of Government" the word "congregation" is sometimes used for an organized church,§ but often a distinction is made between the church and the congregation. The former is composed of believers and their children under regularly-ordained officers. The congre-

* *Minutes General Assembly 1880*, p. 46. † *Ibid., 1881*, p. 591.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 55.

§ *Form of Government*, ch. ix.

gation is sometimes used, as in the "Directory for Worship," ch. i., to designate those who assemble in one place for public worship; and sometimes, as in "Form of Government," ch. xv., the church, together with those who contribute to the support of the work of the church, and, according to the custom, or the charter of the particular church, or the laws of the State, form a recognized body, with certain powers, chiefly in relation to the holding of property. By our "Form of Government" every communicant of the church is a member of the congregation, and has a voice in everything that comes before it;* but the usage or charter of the particular church may determine who else may be members of the congregation—sometimes the heads of families, or all male contributors, or all persons who do anything for the support of the church, and in some cases only those males who are admitted by vote and who sign articles of association. The congregation, thus composed, can of course have no spiritual jurisdiction, but can consider questions of property and such matters as the "Form of Government" may refer to it, as the choice of a Pastor. †

Can a particular church organized by Presbytery hold property?

Not without being incorporated according to the laws of the State. "The utmost care" should be taken, in applying for charters, "to ask for nothing which, if granted, will in any respect contravene the principles or order of our Church." "In any case in which civil enactments, heretofore obtained, do militate with any of the principles or order of our Church," the congregations should "endeavor, as soon as possible, to obtain

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 128.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xv., and *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 405.

the repeal or modification of such enactments, so as to make them consistent with the ecclesiastical order and principles of the Presbyterian Church."* As the Presbytery has oversight of everything which concerns the prosperity of the church and jurisdiction over the congregation,† the charter of a new congregation ought to be submitted to the Presbytery for its approval. In some States there is a general law of incorporation under which a congregation may become a body corporate. In such cases the law should be carefully examined and its terms minutely carried out. When, however, the general law is found to be inconsistent with the Presbyterian "Form of Government," application should be made for a special charter.‡

What is a society?

In some of the New England States the general law of incorporation recognizes a body called the "society," which is thus made a legal body empowered to hold property for the church. It generally consists of certain persons (whether communicants or not) who associate themselves together to manage the finances of the congregation. The law determines the condition of membership and their exercise of power. In the Congregational Church this is an important body, and holds its meetings independently of the church. In many things the vote of the church can have no effect until the society meets and concurs, as in the election of a Pastor. In some Presbyterian churches the society is a distinct body (under the State law) from the congre-

* *O. S. Assembly; Presbyterian Digest*, p. 109.

† *Form of Government*, ch. x.

‡ For a form of an act of incorporation and by-laws see *Manual of Presbyterian Law and Usage*, pp. 307–314.

gation and from the church. In others the word is used to designate the congregation. As a separate body, however, it is foreign to our "Form of Government."

Is it consistent with our polity that a board of Trustees should hold the property of the church?

Trustees may hold and manage the property of the church when elected according to the principles of our "Form of Government" and duly incorporated. They cannot have control of the funds collected for the poor of the church or for the Lord's table: this duty belongs to the Deacons. The board should be elected according to the charter, and should at least once a year present a full report to the congregation. The officers, powers and continuance of the board are determined by the charter. The Pastor of the church, by virtue of his office, has no right to sit with or preside over the board.*

By whom are Trustees to be elected?

By the members of the church, male and female, in full communion, who are entitled to participate and vote in all meetings for business, temporal or spiritual. This seems to be the plain teaching of the "Form of Government." The O. S. Assembly in 1866 declared that a communing member of the church cannot be deprived of his right to vote in such a case (which involved church property) without a decision of the church Session, in which all such power is vested.† Frequently the privilege is extended, by usage or the charter, to certain non-communicants who contribute to the support of the church. The N. S. General Assembly of 1864 said that the question is a legal one, "to be determined by

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 109.

† *Minutes 1866*, p. 54.

local laws relating to church property in the State where the church lies."*

How may a meeting of the congregation be called to elect Trustees or to consider financial affairs?

According to the charter or usage of the church. At such meeting the congregation may elect the chairman and other officers. The Clerk should keep a full record in a book provided for that purpose. A minority, feeling aggrieved, may complain to the Session or petition the Presbytery. No vote of a congregation can affect the rights of a member of the church.†

May the Deacons take charge of the church property?

Yes, if in accordance with the charter of the particular church. Some regard the Deacons as the only proper Trustees under our polity.‡ In 1833 the Assembly declared that in addition to their charge of the charities of the church for the poor, "the temporalities of the church generally may be committed to their care."§

In what other way may church property be held?

In some cases, for special reasons, the title is vested in one or more individuals. This is often done temporarily until a charter can be obtained, or until a sufficient number of persons can be found in the congregation who are qualified to be made Trustees. Individual control of church property is never advisable. A better plan is that the Presbytery obtain a charter, for itself or for a board of Trustees chosen by it, to hold property within its bounds, in trust for missionary or small churches, until they be able to organize and take charge of the property. This is frequently done.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 110.

† *Manual of Presbyterian Law and Usage*, pp. 36, 39.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. vi. § *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 118.

What power have Trustees over church property?

This is determined by the charter and the State laws. "They have no moral right to convert the house of God into a place of business or amusement." So the O. S. Assembly declared in 1860. In 1863 it gave a fuller deliverance: that "the custody and care of the property pertains to them for the uses and purposes for which they hold the trust"—that is, "for the worship of God and the employment of such other means of spiritual improvement as may be consistent with the Scriptures and according to the order of the Church." "The Session is charged with the supervision of the spiritual interests of the congregation; and this includes the right to direct and control the use of the building for the purposes of worship." "The Trustees are bound to respect the wishes and action of the Session as to the use and occupation of the house of worship. The Session is the organ or agent through whom the Trustees are informed how and when the church building is to be occupied; and the Trustees have no right to refuse compliance." If the house is desired for other purposes than for worship, the Trustees may refuse, but they have no right to grant it for purposes which the Session disapprove. If they go contrary to the expressed wishes of the Session, the proper appeal is first to the congregation, to whom the Trustees are responsible, then to the Presbytery, and finally, if necessary, to the legal tribunals. The N. S. Assembly in 1864 declared that the general principle of law, that the trust shall be executed for the sole use of those for whom it is held, shall govern the case.* In 1874 our Assembly decided "that the constitution of our Church charges the Session with the supervision of the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 109, 110.

spiritual interests of the congregation, and all the services and matters pertaining thereto; and that any action by the board of Trustees unauthorized by the congregation, tending to annul or contravene in any way such supervision and control, is illegal and void;" "that, as regards the church building, Sabbath-school and lecture-room, the Trustees have no right to grant or withhold the the use of either against the wishes or consent of the Session." * The Supreme Court of the United States in 1872 decided "that in the use of property for all religious services or ecclesiastical purposes the Trustees are under the control of the church Session." "They are subject, in their official relation to the property, to the control of the Session of the church." †

CHAPTER III.

OF THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

I. By whom was the Christian Church collected?

"*Our blessed Lord at first collected his Church out of different nations, and formed it into one body, by the mission of men endued with miraculous gifts, which have long since ceased.*"

What were these officers called?

Apostles, and sometimes the Twelve or the Disciples. Their names are given in Matt. 10 : 2–4. After the death of Judas, Matthias was numbered with the Eleven (Acts 1 : 16–26), and Paul was called to be the Apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 1 : 1; Gal. 1 : 1, 11–24; 2 : 7, 8).

* *Minutes General Assembly 1874*, p. 84.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 111.

What was an Apostle?

An Apostle was an immediate messenger of Christ, a witness of his doctrine and of his resurrection (Acts 1 : 21, 22; 1 Cor. 9 : 1).

What was the special work of the Apostles?

To testify of Christ, in his name and by his authority to declare the doctrine, worship and polity of the Christian Church, and to superintend its establishment and extension (Acts 1 : 8; 26 : 16; Gal. 1 : 12; 1 Cor. 5 : 3–5; 2 Cor. 10 : 8; 11 : 28).

Were they confined to this work?

No. They were also Ministers, Elders and Fellow-servants (Eph. 3 : 7; 1 Pet. 5 : 1; Rom. 15 : 25).

What were their peculiar gifts?

(1) Inspiration (John 14 : 26; 16 : 13); (2) miraculous powers (Matt. 10 : 8); (3) impartation of the Holy Ghost to others by the imposition of hands (Acts 8 : 17, 18).*

Have these ceased?

Yes. Miracles were intended to excite attention, to certify the messenger as having special divine authority, and to illustrate his teaching. Inspiration was to secure infallibility to the doctrine as spoken and written. When the Church was established, and furnished with the complete word of God for its only rule of faith and practice, the Apostles' work was finished and their peculiar gifts were no longer needed. The Church and the world has long recognized the fact that inspiration, miracles and the impartation of the Holy Ghost have ceased. The Roman Catholic Church still claims these gifts, but only in modified forms; as the infallibility of certain utterances of the Pope, occasional minor miracles, and a grace of orders by the imposition of hands. Even these are not

* *What is Presbyterianism?* p. 53.

credited by many in that Church. The Catholic Apostolic Church (Irvingite) and the Latter-Day Saints claim to possess a restoration of the apostolic office and gifts, but the claim is not admitted by others.

Are there any successors of the Apostles?

No. None can be immediate witnesses of Christ's resurrection and doctrine, none have their peculiar gifts, and none can do their special work. In fact, none other were appointed by Christ or recognized by the early Church. False apostles and antichrists were foretold and rebuked (2 Cor. 11 : 13; 2 Thess. 2 : 3, 4). The Roman Catholic Church and the Episcopal churches claim that besides the above work the Apostles labored as diocesan Bishops, having supreme authority over certain districts and over other Ministers; that they alone had power of ordination; that this office and work continue in the Church; and that their Bishops are the successors of the Apostles. But the Apostles were not confined to districts; they did not ordain successors. The term "Bishop" was applied under them and in the early Church to Pastors. Ordination was performed by the Presbytery, and the parity of the ministry was constantly insisted upon.*

Were there any other extraordinary officers in the Christian Church?

Prophets, who "differed from the Apostles in that their inspiration was occasional, and therefore their authority as teachers subordinate" (1 Cor. 14 : 1–40).† Sometimes they foretold future events.

Why have these ceased?

The Church has the completed word of God.

* See the Acts of the Apostles.

† *Hodge on Ephesians*, p. 149.

Did Christ intend these to be temporary?

He made no provision for their continued work or recognition in the Church. After the apostolic age they ceased, and so have their qualifications, inspiration and miracles.

II. How many ordinary and perpetual officers are there?

"*The ordinary and perpetual officers in the Church are Bishops or Pastors; the representatives of the people, usually styled Ruling Elders; and Deacons.*"

Were these designed to be perpetual?

Yes. Preaching, spiritual oversight and the care of the poor are their several functions, and correspond to permanent needs in the Church. Provision was made for the continuance of these officers by election and ordination. Qualifications were given, and directions for the performance of duties.*

What officers were in the synagogue?

The Ruler of the synagogue, and a bench of Elders who assisted him in the oversight of the people.†

Were these transferred to the Christian Church?

This system had long been recognized in the Church as of divine authority, and both Jews and Gentiles were familiar with it. The synagogues were the proper and most convenient places for the preaching of the gospel. Often the Elders of the synagogue and the mass of the people became Christian, and the synagogue became the church. The long-established government and the recognized officers were continued and sanctioned by the Apostles. Where there was no synagogue, or when it did not become christianized, the Apostles formed the

* See below, under Chs. IV., V., VI.

† *Primitive Church Officers*, pp. 11, 12; *Miller on Presbyterianism*, pp. 10, 11.

church after the same model, with Pastor, Elders and Deacons.*

CHAPTER IV.

OF BISHOPS OR PASTORS.

What is the first office in the Church?

"*The pastoral office is the first in the Church, both for dignity and usefulness,*" as shown by the names, authority, qualifications, duties and rewards connected with it in Scriptures.†

By what names is this officer called?

"*The person who fills this office hath, in Scripture, obtained different names expressive of his various duties.*" He is termed—

(1) "*Bishop,*" "*as he has oversight of the flock of Christ*" (Acts 20 : 28).

(2) "*Pastor,*" "*as he feeds them with spiritual food*" (1 Pet. 5 : 2; Jer. 3 : 15).

(3) "*Minister,*" "*as he serves Christ in his Church*" (1 Cor. 4 : 1).

(4) "*Presbyter or Elder,*" "*as it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ*" (1 Pet. 5 : 1; Tit. 1 : 5; 1 Tim. 5 : 1, 17, 19).

(5) "*Angel of the Church,*" "*as he is the messenger of God*" (Rev. 1 : 20; 2 : 1).

(6) "*Ambassador,*" "*as he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ*" (2 Cor. 5 : 20).

* See Acts of the Apostles. † Epistles to Timothy.

(7) *"Steward of the mysteries of God," "as he dispenses the manifold grace of God and the ordinances instituted by Christ"* (Luke 12 : 42; 1 Cor. 4 : 1, 2).

Is he properly a Bishop?

He is so called in Scripture. The qualifications are ascribed to him. The work of oversight and ordination are committed to him. No permanent superior officer is described.*

Are ministers officially equal?

The parity of the ministry is taught in Scripture. There is no higher office. All have the same qualifications, titles and work.

What churches hold a threefold ministry?

The Episcopal churches—Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, each having separate functions. The Bishop, having oversight and authority over the other Ministers and over the churches within a certain district, and the powers of confirmation and ordination; the Priest, being pastor of a local church, subject to his Bishop, and having direction over the Deacon; the Deacon, being the assistant of the Priest in parish work, and in preaching if he be licensed to do so. The Romish Church adds to these the Pope, as having supreme and infallible authority over the whole Church as the vicar of Christ and successor of Peter.

Is a Minister ever called a "Priest" in the Scriptures?

There were Priests under the ceremonial dispensation, as the types of Christ and his work. But since the only High Priest and Mediator Jesus Christ fulfilled these types, the name "Priest" is nowhere given to a Minister

* *What is Presbyterianism?* pp. 36–62; *Primitive Church Offices,* pp. 29–67; *Miller on Presbyterianism,* pp. 13–21.

in the Christian Church, nor are the functions of sacrificial service ascribed to him.*

What are the peculiar duties of the Minister?

(1) Preaching the word; (2) administering the sacraments; (3) blessing the people; and (4) ordination.

What duties does he share with Ruling Elders?

Government in the particular church and in the various judicatories.†

What duties does he share with Deacons?

The care of the poor, distribution of the charities of the church, and the oversight of the temporalities of the congregation.

In all his duties, what is his relation to Christ and to the Church?

He is the Minister of Christ, accountable to him, subject only to him and to his brethren in the Lord. He is not a lord of God's heritage, but placed over the church for its edification (1 Cor. 3 : 5; 4 : 1–5; Acts 15 : 6–31; 1 Pet. 5 : 3).‡

Does his office depend upon his connection with a particular church?

A Minister may be ordained *sine titulo*, to do general missionary work. But generally he is ordained when, as a Probationer, he shall have preached so much to the satisfaction of a congregation that he shall be regularly called by them, and set over them by the Presbytery.§ When, for any cause, the pastoral relation is dissolved by the order of Presbytery, his authority and duties in that congregation cease, but his office as a Minister continues. He may still preach, administer the sacraments, bless the people, perform the marriage service, take part

* See p. 72.

† *Form of Government*, ch. v.

‡ *Ibid.*, chs. xiv. and xv.

§ *Ibid.*, ch. xv.

in ordinations and sit in the church courts.* In the Presbyterian churches of Scotland only Pastors and Teachers of theology are permitted to vote in the church courts.

What is a Pastor?

He is a Minister regularly installed over one or more churches by the Presbytery.†

What is a Stated Supply?

A Licentiate or Minister who has a temporary charge of a church, sometimes engaged by the church for a few months, and sometimes year by year. This should never be done without the permission of Presbytery, which has the oversight of the churches and Ministers. It is sometimes permitted in feeble churches in hopes of uniting the churches, or that the Stated Supply may be called as Pastor, or in case of the prolonged sickness or absence of the Pastor. The Stated Supply has no authority in the church, nor has he a seat or vote in Session.‡ When the relation of a Stated Supply to a church is continued beyond the emergency, it is an irregularity, an evil, and is inconsistent with our polity.§ The O. S. and N. S. Assemblies agree in the above. Since the reunion the General Assembly declared "that Stated Supplies should not preach in the pulpits of any Presbytery without its consent, and when the consent is refused the Presbytery to which such Minister serving as Stated Supply belongs, being notified, should recall him within its own bounds;" that the Stated Supply has not the right, power or prerogative in the church Session as a Pastor;‖ "that he has such rights and prerogatives as may

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 163. † *Form of Government*, ch. xv.
‡ See pp. 127, 370. § *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 112, 113.
‖ *Minutes General Assembly 1874*, pp. 83, 85.

be expressly conferred on him by the Presbytery, and no other." *

What are co-Pastors?

They are two or more Ministers associated together as Pastors of one or more churches, having equal authority. †

What is a Pastor emeritus?

When a Pastor has long served a church, but through age or infirmity cannot continue his labors, he may receive this honorable title when the church are unwilling that the pastoral relation should be formally dissolved. With the approbation of Presbytery he is relieved from all the duties of his office, and another Minister is called to be their acting Pastor. His salary may in whole or in part be continued. It is not usual that he should claim a seat in the Session or exercise any official jurisdiction in the church.

What is a Pastor's Assistant?

He may be a Probationer or an ordained Minister chosen by the church or Pastor, with the approbation of Presbytery, to assist the Pastor, for a time or permanently, in the discharge of his duties. As he is to labor in the church, the congregation should be consulted in the choice of an Assistant, even if the Pastor alone becomes responsible for his maintenance. As he is to assist the Pastor, he should be consulted in the selection, even if the congregation pays the whole salary of the Assistant. He has no seat in Session nor jurisdiction in the congregation. In his duties he acts in the name and under the direction of the Pastor. In Scotland he is called the Pastor's Helper.

* *Minutes General Assembly 1878*, p. 120.

† *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. v.

What is a Minister without charge?

He is a Minister who has been released from his pastoral charge, and is not yet settled over another congregation.

What is a Minister "in transitu"?

He is a Minister who has been dismissed from one Presbytery, and has not yet presented his letter to be received into another Presbytery. During this transition he "is always to be considered as remaining under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery which dismissed him until he actually becomes a member of another."*

What is a Pastor elect?

A Minister or Probationer who has been called to be a Pastor of a church is called Pastor elect until he either declines the call or is actually installed.†

What is an Evangelist?

He is a Minister regularly ordained, but not settled over a particular church. His work is "to preach the gospel, administer sealing ordinances and organize churches in frontier or destitute settlements."‡

The title is often given to Ministers without charge, who even in large cities preach to the masses, and to those who are engaged for a longer or shorter time to hold in churches or communities revival services.

Laymen, with more or less ecclesiastical authority or recognition, and those who without such supervision, on their individual responsibility, are performing evangelistic work, are also often called Evangelists.

What is a Missionary?

Missionaries are ordained men, generally Evangelists,

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. x., sect. ii. † See p. 127.
‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. xv. See p. 356.

sent out by the Church to labor among the heathen. Home Missionaries are Ministers, Evangelists or Pastors in feeble churches or in destitute places, either within or beyond Presbytery, commissioned by the Board of Home Missions. Those employed by the missionary department of the Board of Publication were formerly called Colporteurs, but now are "Missionaries of the Board of Publication."*

What is a Chaplain?

He is a Minister appointed by the government, with the approbation of Presbytery, to labor as a Minister in the army or navy or in prisons or asylums.† He is accountable for his doctrine and character, not to the government, but to the Presbytery, as are all other Ministers.

What is an itinerant Missionary?

A Minister or Licentiate sent for a few months on preaching-tours in destitute parts of the country. In the early part of the history of our Church this was frequently done. The Synod or Assembly marked out the route and designated the places to be visited and the time to be employed. Pastors were required by the O. S. Assembly to spend some portion of their time in itinerating labors.‡

How else may a Minister be engaged?

Ministers are often called to take charge of the general work of the Church—as *Secretaries* of its various Boards, as *Professors* of its theological schools, as *Presidents and Teachers* of its colleges and academies, and as *Editors* of its publications. They are always subject to their several

* *Minutes General Assembly 1874*, pp. 31, 60.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 164.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 326, 328, 346, 358.

Presbyteries, except so far as their official fidelity is concerned; for this, of course, they are responsible to the body which appointed them. In the discharge of their duties they should give great prominence to their character and influence as Ministers of Christ. This is insisted upon in the "Form of Government" adopted by the Southern Presbyterian Church.*

What is a retired Minister?

A Minister is said to be honorably retired when, because of sickness, old age or for any other reason, he ceases to be engaged in ministerial work. He cannot demit his office.† He is still responsible to Presbytery and a member of it.‡ He is not a layman, and cannot be elected Elder or Deacon.§ He cannot be enrolled as a communicant of a particular church, nor vote at church meetings,‖ except on financial questions, when, if he be a pewholder, as such he may vote, provided the charter of the said church permits pewholders to vote.¶ In the General Assembly Minutes such are designated H. R.

CHAPTER V.

OF RULING ELDERS.

What are Ruling Elders?

"*Ruling Elders are properly the representatives of the people, chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction with Pastors or Ministers.*"

* *Book of Church Order*, ch. iv., sects. v., vi.

† See p. 209. ‡ See p. 220. § See pp. 57 and 66.

‖ See p. 130. ¶ See p. 38.

When was this office introduced into the Church?

It has been the permanent office in the Church under all dispensations, even under the Abrahamic. (See Gen. 24 : 2; 50 : 7; Ex. 3 : 16; 4 : 29, 30; 12 : 21; 18 : 12; Deut. 5 : 23; Ps. 107 : 32, etc.) Under the Mosaic ritual the Elders were the recognized representatives of the people. They were systematically arranged into courts having various jurisdictions, and the highest court of seventy Elders was a court of appeal (Ex. 18 : 21–25; Num. 11 : 16, 25; Ex. 24 : 1.)* These Elders and courts are frequently referred to in the after history. When the synagogues were established (the date of which is uncertain) these Elders were connected with the different synagogues, and were called the Rulers of the synagogue (Matt. 5 : 22; 26 : 3; Luke 7 : 3; Acts 4 : 8, 23; 6 : 12; 23 : 14; 24 : 1; 25 : 15). At first the converts to Christianity were made from Jews, and later from Gentiles who were accustomed to the polity of the synagogues, which were established in almost every city in the Roman empire. Often a whole synagogue became a Christian church, retaining its form of government. The other churches were formed in like manner (Acts 14 : 23; 20 : 17; 1 Tim. 5 : 1, 17, 19; Tit. 1 : 5; James 5 : 14; 1 Pet. 5 : 1, 5).†

Many of the Fathers speak of Elders as distinct from Ministers, ruling as representatives of the people.‡ The Waldensian and other ancient churches which were regarded by Rome as heretical, but which maintained pure doctrine, worship and polity, have always retained this

* *Miller on Ruling Elders*, pp. 29–34.

† *Primitive Church Offices*, pp. 1–28; *Miller on Presbyterianism*, pp. 9-13; *Miller on Ruling Elders*, pp. 48–72.

‡ *Miller on Ruling Elders*, pp. 72–106.

office. It is adopted by almost all the Reformed churches.*

"This office has been understood, by a great part of the Protestant Reformed churches, to be designated in the Holy Scriptures, by the title of governments; and of those who rule well, but do not labor in the word and doctrine" (1 Cor. 12 : 28; Rom. 12 : 7, 8; 1 Tim. 5 : 17). It is the continuation in the Christian Church of the office so well known in the Old Testament. "The whole congregation" and the "Elders of the congregation" are constantly interchanged as meaning the same, as in Lev. 4 : 13, 15. The Elders were the representatives of the people, and as such exercised the prerogative of ruling. This principle of ruling by representatives and the office of Elders were introduced into the Christian Church from the synagogue by the Apostles.†

The "Form of Government" of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland says: "As there were in the Jewish Church Elders of the people joined with the Priests and Levites in the government of the Church, so Christ, who hath instituted government and governors ecclesiastical in the Church, hath furnished some in his Church, besides the Ministers of the word, with gifts of government, and with commission to exercise the same when called thereunto, who are to join with the Minister in the government of the Church. Which officers Reformed churches commonly call Elders."*

Is this office distinct from that of the ministry?

The quotation above from the standard of the Church

* *Miller on Ruling Elders*, pp. 107–147; *Authorized Standards of the Free Church of Scotland*, p. 307.

† *Church Polity*, p. 262; *Miller on Presbyterianism*, p. 9; *Primitive Church Offices*, Essay I.; *Divine Right of Church Government*, p. 172.

of Scotland declares the office to be distinct. This is the doctrine of our own "Form of Government."* They have different qualifications, are chosen by different bodies. Elders are ordained by a Minister, and Ministers by the Presbytery.† Elders are subject to the Session, the Minister to the Presbytery.‡ Elders cannot take part in the ordination of Ministers, nor can they administer the sacraments.§ Elders, called to the ministry, must be reordained.† Ministers are not permitted to serve as Elders except in emergencies on missionary-ground.‖ In the Church of Scotland, Ministers are often chosen by churches to represent them in the General Assembly, but it is not on the supposition that Ministers and Elders are of the same office. The "Form of Government" is distinct on that point.

Wherein do they differ from Ministers?

Ministers are "*messengers of God*" and "*ambassadors of Christ.*" Elders are representatives of the people. They perform their work "*in conjunction with Pastors or Ministers,*" and under their direction. They have no power to preach or administer the sacraments.¶

What are their duties?

"*To exercise government and discipline in conjunction with Pastors or Ministers*" in the different courts of the Church, and to assist the Pastor in the oversight, instruction and visitation of the people, "studying the peace, unity and purity of the Church."** If there be no Pas-

* See chs. iii., iv. and v.

† *Form of Government*, chs. xiii., xiv. and xv.

‡ *Ibid.*, ch. xiii., sect. vii.; *Book of Discipline*, chs. iv. and v.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 116, 117.

‖ *Minutes of the G. A. 1874*, p. 84; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 339, 340.

¶ *Directory for Worship*, ch. vii., sect. i., and ch. viii.

** *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. iv.

tor, for the time being the government and discipline devolve upon them, and under direction of Presbytery they must see that the pulpit is supplied from Sabbath to Sabbath; and if this be impracticable, they must themselves conduct the service, "select the portions of Scripture and of the other books to be read"—"works of such approved divines as the Presbytery within whose bounds they are, may recommend and they may be able to procure." *

By whom are they chosen?

"*They are the representatives of the people, chosen by them,*" "in the mode most approved and in use in that congregation." † In 1822 the Assembly said that "it would be most desirable to have the communicants only as the electors of Ruling Elders, yet as it appears to be the custom in some of the churches in the Presbyterian connection to allow this privilege to others," the election by the whole congregation should not be considered void. In 1830 it decided that unbaptized persons could not vote for Elders. In 1855 the O. S. Assembly judged "it most consonant to our 'Form of Government' that communicants only should vote for Ruling Elders." ‡ The Southern Presbyterian Church permits only communicants in good standing to vote for church officers. §

Who may be chosen?

"In all cases the persons elected must be male members in full communion of the church in which they are to exercise their office." ‖ They must be in good standing. A communicant under discipline cannot be elected.

* *Form of Government*, ch. xxi. † *Ibid.*, ch. xiii., sect. ii.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 342. See p. 283.
§ *Book of Church Order*, ch. vi., sect. iii., sub-sect. iv.
‖ *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. ii.

An unemployed Minister in the congregation is not a member of a particular church, and is not eligible. So the O. S. and N. S. Assemblies decided, and so did the Assembly in 1874.* Appendix, p. 520.

In what church may he exercise his office?

Only in the congregation in which he has been elected, and in those courts above the Session to which he is sent as delegate. An Elder without charge has no jurisdiction. Nor can he hold office in two different churches at the same time.*

Is election by the people necessary?

Persons nominated and ordained by a Minister are to be considered "as private church members only, unless they be duly elected and set apart as church officers hereafter." †

Must they be ordained?

"The Minister shall proceed to set apart the candidate by prayer to the office of Ruling Elder." ‡ In 1868 the N. S. Assembly declared that an Elder elect cannot sit in the Session or exercise his office until he be ordained. § This ordination may be either by prayer, or by prayer with the laying on of hands by the Minister. It is left to the discretion of each church which method to adopt, but as the imposition of hands "is plainly in accordance with apostolic example, it is the opinion of the Assembly (in 1833) that it is proper and lawful." ‖

To what court is he responsible?

To the Session, being a member of the particular church. When, however, the only Elder or Elders of

* *Minutes of General Assembly 1874*, p. 84; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 339.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 115, 123; *Form of Government*, chs. x., xi. and xii. ‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. iv.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 124. ‖ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

the church be accused, the Presbytery is the court to cite and try.* When an Elder has become incapable of serving the church to edification, the Session may take action with his concurrence, or by advice of Presbytery.† In 1869 the O. S. Assembly decided that the Presbytery has power to visit particular churches, to inquire into their state, and to order whatever pertains to their spiritual welfare, without being requested by the Session, even to declaring that an Elder shall cease to act.‡

Is the office perpetual?

"The offices of Ruling Elder and Deacon are both perpetual, and cannot be laid aside at pleasure." Nor can an Elder be divested of his office but by deposition. But he may, under certain circumstances, cease to be an acting Ruling Elder.§

How may an Elder cease to be an acting Elder?

(1) By death.

(2) When "by age or infirmity he become incapable of performing the duties of his office," with his consent or by advice of Presbytery the Session may relieve him.†

(3) "Though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, he may become unacceptable, in his official capacity, to a majority of the congregation;" with his concurrence or by advice of Presbytery the Session may take order, stating the reasons of their action.‖

(4) If guilty of heresy or immorality, he may be deposed after trial before Session.

(5) He may and should resign if he cannot acquiesce in the decisions of the superior courts.¶ App., p. 520.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 118.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. vii.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 350. See pp. 293, 294.

§ *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. vi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 348.

‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 171. ¶ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

(6) By advice of a superior court he may resign to promote the peace of the church.*

(7) "His dismission by letter from a church terminates his official relation to that church." So the N. S. Assembly decided in 1867.† This is the teaching of "Form of Government," ch. xiii., sect. ii., and is implied by the order of the O. S. Assembly in 1856, which requires an election and service of installation in the church to which he is dismissed before he can act as Elder there.‡

(8) By the expiration of his term of service, when he has been elected to exercise his functions for a limited time, according to section viii. of chapter xiii., adopted in 1875.§

May an Elder without charge sit in a church court?

He cannot.‖ Yet if elected on the term-eldership scheme, after his term has expired his advice may be sought by the Session (but he cannot vote), and he is "entitled to represent that particular church in the higher judicatories when appointed by the Session or Presbytery."¶

Does restoration to church privileges of an Elder who has been suspended from them, restore to office?

"The two things are distinct." "He cannot be restored to the functions of his office without a special and express act of the Session for that purpose, with the acquiescence of the church."‖

If he has been dismissed to another church, and returns to the church in which he was formerly Elder, he must be re-elected and installed, as his dismission termi-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 350. † *Ibid.*, p. 352.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 347. § See p. 294. ‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 349.
¶ *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. viii. See p. 297.

nated his relation to that church. This seems plain from the "Form of Government" and the usage in the Church.* The N. S. Assembly, however, in 1868 decided that if an Elder should return, after three years' absence, with an unused letter of dismission, and give satisfactory reasons for not using it, his restoration to membership restores him to his official position.†

What are Elders in other churches?

In the Episcopal Church there are properly no Elders, though the Priests are sometimes so called. The name "Priest" is discarded by the Reformed Episcopal Church, and "Presbyter" is adopted in its place.‡ The Methodists call their Ministers, Preachers or Elders. The Presiding Elders are Elders chosen by the Bishops to preside over a district for not more than four years, to take oversight of churches and Ministers, and be assistants to the Bishop.§ In the Reformed (Dutch) and in the Lutheran churches the Elders correspond to our Ruling Elders.‖

CHAPTER VI.

OF DEACONS.

What are Deacons?

"The Scriptures clearly point out Deacons as distinct officers in the church, whose business it is to take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections which

* See act of O. S. Assembly in 1849. *Assembly's Digest*, p. 69.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 352.

‡ *Book of Common Prayer of the Reformed Episcopal Church.*

§ *Discipline* (1880), ¶ 164–173.

‖ *Formula of Government*, ch. iii., sect. vi.

may be raised for their use. To them also may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the church."

When was this office introduced into the Church?

There is no mention of Deacons under the Old-Testament dispensation. The contributions of money were under the care of the Levites and Priests (Ex. 38 : 21; Num. 1 : 50, 53; Ezra. 8 : 24–30, 33). Special provisions were made under the law for the relief of the poor by individual, instead of official, contributions and care (Ex. 23 : 11; Lev. 19 : 9, 10; 25 : 25–55). Rev. James M. Wilson, D. D., in a pamphlet on "The Deacon" (p. 23), says: "In the language of Dr. McLeod, 'There were several officers in the Jewish synagogue, and these were authorized to conduct the public worship, preserve order and manage the finances of the congregation' ('Ecc. Cat.,' Ques. 51). This latter officer was the Chazan or Deacon of the synagogue ('Prideaux's Connections,' part i., book vi.), and in the words of Prideaux, 'the Chazanim—that is, Overseers—who were also fixed Ministers and under the Rulers of the synagogue, had charge and oversight of all things in it, kept the sacred books of the law and the prophets and other Holy Scriptures, as also the books of their public liturgies, and all other utensils belonging to the synagogue.' The order of the synagogue was, as all Presbyterians hold, the model of that of the Church under the New-Testament dispensation. In the synagogue was an officer that attended to the poor, had oversight of the place of worship and managed the finances." We have in Acts 6 : 1–6 the history of the introduction of this office into the Christian Church, the occasion, necessity of the office, the qualifications and duties of Deacons, their election and ordination.

Was this office designed to be permanent?

It is evident from Acts 6 : 1–6 that the office was not introduced because of a temporary emergency. The work committed to Deacons is a permanent one, for the poor we shall have with us always (Matt. 26 : 11), the Church is enjoined to make provision for them (Gal. 2 : 10), and contributions always will be given for the relief of Christians and for the extension of the Church, as in the days of the Apostles. The qualifications—honesty, good report, being filled with the Holy Ghost and wisdom, being the husband of one wife, ruling his children and own house well (Acts 6 : 3; 1 Tim. 3 : 12)—are not those which indicate an extraordinary and temporary office. Deacons were recognized as regular officers of fully-organized churches (Phil. 1 : 1; Rom. 12 : 7 ("ministry," *διακονίαν*); 1 Pet. 4 : 11 (*εἴ τις διακονεῖ*). The office has always continued in the Church in some form, was recognized by all the Reformers, and is continued in all branches of the Church.

It is "perpetual," in the sense that "it cannot be laid aside at pleasure. No person can be divested of it but by deposition." But under certain circumstances (see below) a Deacon may cease to exercise his office and to be an acting Deacon.*

What are the duties of Deacons?

"*To take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections which may be raised for their use. To them also may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the church.*" This includes visitation of those in need, inquiring into their real wants, helping them to obtain work and comforting them. Being church officers, they should always unite with temporal relief

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. vi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 348.

spiritual consolation, instruction and prayer. In many churches it is the duty of the Deacons to take charge of the communion set, and to bring it, with clean table-linen, to the church on the communion Sabbath, and from the poor fund, or some other designated fund, to provide the bread and wine for the Lord's table.

What funds are committed to their charge?

The poor fund, however this may be raised. The collection taken at the administration of the Lord's Supper is usually devoted to the poor fund, which is increased by other means. "Over charities collected for any other purpose than those specified (for the poor) their office gives them no control." The poor to be cared for are those outside of as well as in the church.* The Southern Presbyterian Church makes it part of the duty of the Deacons to collect and distribute "the offerings of the people for pious uses under the direction of the Session." †

"*The temporal affairs of the church*" would include all money raised for the support of the ordinances of the church, and for the erection and preservation of the buildings belonging to it. All this may properly be committed to the Deacons. The "First Book of Discipline of the Kirk of Scotland" says: "The Deacons should take up the whole rents of the Kirk, disposing of them to the ministry, the schools and poor within their bounds, according to the appointment of the Kirk." "Under the patrimony of the Kirk we comprehend all things given or to be given to the Kirk and service of God, as lands, buildings, possessions, annual rents, and all such-like wherewith the Kirk is doted, either by do-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 118.

† *Book of Church Order*, ch. iv., sect. ii.

nations, foundations, mortifications, or any other lawful titles of kings, princes or any persons inferior to them, together with the continual oblations of the faithful." This patrimony should be distributed by the Deacons to the Pastor, the poor, the sick and strangers, and to the upholding of other affairs of the Kirk. "We add hereunto the schools and schoolmasters." "To whom we join also Clerks of Assemblies, . . . syndics or procurators of the Kirk affairs, takers-up of psalms and such like other ordinary officers of the Kirk."* It is usual in our Church to place all these temporal affairs in the charge of Trustees, and the Deacons have charge only of the poor fund. When the Deacons have the care of the property of the church, they are under the same limitations, etc. in their management thereof as the Trustees are in other churches.†

To whom are the other collections committed?

The Session of the church receive from the General Assembly and the other courts recommendations of various objects to be presented to the people for their benevolent contributions.‡ The collections are sent by the Session to the Treasurers of the several Boards as the church may contribute to each. Sometimes monthly collections are received for all the Boards, and the sum-total is divided by the Session among the Boards according to the ratio recommended by the General Assembly.

Has the Session any direct control over the poor fund?

To the Deacons belongs the sole responsibility of its management and distribution. The Session "may advise the Deacons respecting the use of funds." So the

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 64. † See pp. 38–41.
‡ See p. 109.

O. S. Assembly decided in 1857. The question does not seem to have come before the N. S. Church, or the Assembly since the reunion. But the language of the book seems plain that the poor fund is entirely in the hands of the Deacons.*

How do Deacons differ from Ministers?

They are laymen. They labor chiefly for a certain class in the congregation. They have no seat in the church courts.† They have no part in ordination, preaching the word, administering the sacraments, or participating in the government of the church.

How do they differ from Ruling Elders?

The Elders have the spiritual oversight of the whole church; the Deacons have the care of the temporal wants of a part, and sometimes the charge of the property and revenue of the congregation.

Did not the Deacons ordained by the Apostles preach?

Not as Deacons. The object of their appointment was that the Apostles and Ministers might be relieved from serving tables, and that they might give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word (Acts 6 : 2–4). The qualifications required are not aptness to teach, etc., but honest report, prudence, gravity, temperance, faith, consistency, being full of the Holy Ghost, and not greedy of lucre (Acts 6 : 3; 1 Tim. 3 : 8, 9, 10). Stephen "did great wonders and miracles among the people," and he did speak with wisdom and spirit, both in his daily intercourse with men and in his defence when accused of blasphemy before the Sanhedrim (Acts 7). It may be questioned whether his defence, speaking with wisdom and spirit, and disputations, were of the nature of preaching, the official and authoritative proc-

* See p. 70.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 118.

lamation of the gospel. But if so, there is no indication that he preached as a Deacon, for preaching is never elsewhere referred to the diaconate. Even in the Episcopal churches the Deacon is not permitted to preach by virtue of his office, but must receive a license to do so, from the Bishop after due examination. Stephen probably held two offices—that of Deacon and that of Evangelist, as did Philip, another of the seven (Acts 21 : 8).

Who may be chosen Deacons?

"In all cases the persons elected must be male members in full communion in the church in which they are to exercise their office." * A Minister, therefore, though without charge, not being a member of a particular church, cannot be elected Deacon. This was reaffirmed by the N. S. Assembly in 1865 and 1869; † and the principle is stated (the application, however, is to the eligibility to the office of Ruling Elder) by the General Assembly of 1874. ‡

May a woman be elected?

"In all cases the persons elected must be male members." * Rev. Charles Hodge, D. D., says: "In addition to Deacons, we know that Deaconesses were in some instances appointed" (in the apostolic Church), "but we have no evidence that it was the universal practice." § Phœbe is called by Paul "a servant of the Church" (*διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας*). Tryphœna, Tryphosa and the beloved Persis, "who labor in the Lord," are supposed by some to be Deaconesses in the same church (Rom. 16 : 1 and 12). In 1 Tim. 3 : 11 it is required that the wives

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. ii.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 340.
‡ *Minutes General Assembly 1874*, p. 84.
§ *Church Polity*, p. 278.

(γυναῖκας) of the Deacons "must be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things;" and some suppose that they held official relations to the church as Deaconesses. In 1 Tim. 5 : 9 the expression, "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old," is understood by some as those poor women who should be assisted by the church, but others hold that it refers to those women who may be chosen Deaconesses, to have charge of the female part of the congregation. Such women officers are considered to have been specially necessary among the Gentile converts, whose women were held in greater seclusion than among the Jews.* Tabitha or Dorcas is also by some regarded as holding this office (Acts 9 : 36). In the early Church there were Deaconesses who had charge of the poor and sick of their own sex, but the office was abolished in the Latin Church in the eleventh century, and in the Greek Church in the twelfth century.†

There is no evidence that the Deaconesses, or those women who had care of the poor in the apostolic Church, were formally elected or ordained as officers in the church. Many women ministered of their substance, as did those of Galilee unto Christ (Luke 8 : 3), and devoted much time and labor to the poor, and were, with the wives of the Deacons, regarded as helpers in this work, but probably without official position. The Southern Presbyterian Church formally states what has always been the usage in Presbyterian churches: "Where it shall appear needful, the church Session may select and appoint godly women for the care of the sick, of prisoners, of poor widows and orphans, and in general for the relief of distress."‡

* See *History of Apostolic Church*, p. 535.

† *American Cyclopædia.*

‡ *Book of Church Order*, ch. iv., sect. iv., sub-sect. vi.

By whom are Deacons to be elected?

"Every congregation shall elect persons to the office of Ruling Elder, and to the office of Deacon, or either of them, in the mode most approved and in use in that congregation." * Those who vote for Elders may vote for Deacons.†

Must they be ordained and installed?

The same rules apply to them as to Ruling Elders as to ordination, installation, resignation, deposition, removal, dismissal, return, ceasing to act, effect of suspension and restoration.‡

May a person be at once Elder and Deacon?

The O. S. Assembly in 1840 declared that while it is desirable that these offices should be kept distinct, "yet in the opinion of this Assembly it is not inconsistent with the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, nor with the precedent furnished in filling the office of Deacon in its first institution, that where a necessity exists the same individual should sustain both offices." § The N. S. Assembly took no action on this question, but the wording of the "Form of Government" ch. xiii., sect. ii., seems to imply that persons may be elected to both offices or to either of them. In 1880 the Assembly was asked, "When a Deacon in any church is elected and installed a Ruling Elder in the same church, does he cease to exercise the functions of his office as a Deacon?" and answered, "Not necessarily." ||

When there are no Deacons the Session usually, as a body, take the oversight of the poor or appoint one or more of the Elders to act as Deacons.

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. ii. † See p. 56.
‡ See pp. 57–60. § *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 119.
|| *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 56.

May a Deacon sit in the church courts?

He is neither a Minister nor a representative of the people, and has therefore no judicial power.*

To what court is he responsible?

He is a communicant of a particular church, and therefore he is responsible to the Session. The Deacons should seek the advice of the Session in regard to the discharge of their duties as Deacons.† Their records and accounts should be presented at least once a year to the congregation or to the Session (the representatives of the people) for review and approval. The "Second Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland" says: "They ought to do according to the judgment and appointment of the Presbyteries or Elderships (of which the Deacons are not members), that the patrimony of the Kirk and poor be not converted to private men's uses nor wrongfully distributed."‡ The Southern Presbyterian Church requires that "a complete account of collections and distributions, and a full record of proceedings, shall be kept by the Deacons, and submitted to the Session for examination and approval at least once a year."§

May Deacons assist the Elders at the Lord's table?

The N. S. Assembly referred the matter to the discretion of the Sessions in 1867.‖ This was affirmed by the Assembly of the reunited Church.¶

May a Deacon be elected for a term of years?

No action has been taken by the Assembly. But since rotary or term eldership is permitted, there seems no rea-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 118. † *Ibid.*, p. 119.
‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 64.
§ *Book of Church Order*, ch. iv., sect. iv., sub-sect. iv.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 119.
¶ *Assembly's Minutes 1874*, p. 84, and *1877*, p. 516.

son why the Deacons may not be elected in the same manner, as the two offices are considered together in ch. xiii. of the "Form of Government." App., p. 520.

What is the Board of Deacons?

The Deacons cannot act on individual responsibility, but must meet together and organize as a Board of Deacons. They should appoint a Moderator, a Clerk and a Treasurer, attend to their business in an orderly way, determine methods for searching out the poor, visiting the sick, obtaining work and relieving the distressed. They should consider the cases brought before them, and determine how to answer their applications. They should keep full records and accounts of money received and distributed, and at certain times present them to Session for approval. If the management of the temporal affairs is also committed to them, they should keep a separate account of property and moneys of the congregation.

Often the members of Session are expected to be present at the Deacons' meeting, to advise, but not to vote.* The Southern Presbyterian Church declares that one of the duties of the Session is "to examine the records of the proceedings of the Deacons." †

What are Deacons in other churches?

In the Episcopal Church, Deacons are Ministers in the lowest order.‡

In the Congregational Church they are spiritual officers. They have no care of the poor; they are elected by the church, but are not ordained; they, with the Pas-

* See above. *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. viii.; ch. x., sect. ix.; ch. xi., sect. vi.; chs. xix. and xx.

† *Book of Church Order*, ch. v., sect. iii., sub-sect. v.

‡ See p. 358.

tor, form the Prudential Committee, who take the oversight of the communicants, and report to the church whatever may require their action; they assist the Pastor in the sacrament.

In the Baptist Church, which is Congregational in polity, they are sometimes ordained with the laying on of hands.

In the Methodist Church the Deacons hold much the same office as in the Episcopal Church.

In the Reformed (Dutch) Church the Deacons do not differ from ours.

In the Lutheran Church they correspond to our Deacons, except that they assist the Pastor at the Lord's table, render all necessary service at public worship, see that the Pastor receives proper salary and administer the temporal affairs of the church.*

CHAPTER VII.

OF ORDINANCES IN A PARTICULAR CHURCH.

What is an ordinance?

That which is established by authority. In the Church the constitutional rules and the decisions of the highest court are never called "ordinances." They have merely church authority, and may be revised and changed by new rules and later decisions. But that which is ordained of God is an ordinance, binding on the conscience, and cannot be changed save by the order of God. All the laws of God, appointed services, times, ceremonies, types and officers are in Scripture called ordinances (Ex. 18 : 20;

* *Formula of Government*, ch. iii., sect. vi.

Num. 9 : 12; Ps. 99 : 7; Luke 1 : 6; Col. 2 : 14; Heb. 9 : 1, 10; Rom. 13 : 2). In the Christian Church, therefore, "*the ordinances* (*are*) *established by Christ the Head.*" They have his authority and are of perpetual obligation.

What ordinances has Christ established?

"*Prayer, singing praises, reading, expounding and preaching the word of God, administering baptism and the Lord's Supper, public solemn fasting and thanksgiving, catechising, making collections for the poor and other pious purposes, exercising discipline, and blessing the people.*"

For what purposes were these ordinances given?

"Christ hath given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto." *

For whose benefit were they given?

For the Church as a body, and for the present and future members thereof (1 Cor. 14 : 4–40).

Wherein do the ordinances of the Old Testament differ from those of the New?

"Under the law, the covenant was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins and eternal salvation.

"Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was ex-

* *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxv., sect. iii.

hibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, which, though fewer in number and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fullness, evidence and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations." *

What connection have the ordinances of the two dispensations?

Those of the Old Testament were typical, ceremonial, ritualistic and complicated. In the New Testament these are retained in their substance, but the outward forms are changed. The complicated, ritualistic and ceremonial services of the temple become the more simple and direct worship of God. The veil is rent, we come with boldness to the mercy-seat (John 4 : 21–24; Heb. 4 : 16). The prophetical and typical ordinances, after the fulfillment of the promises and the accomplishment of all that was signified, take the forms of declarations, or "setting forth" what has been done (1 Cor. 11 : 26), of grateful reminders (1 Cor. 11 : 24) and of loving consecration and participation (John 6 : 53–63; 1 Cor. 10 : 16).

What is the difference between an ordinance and a sacrament?

An ordinance is the more general term, and includes whatever is ordained of God. As these ordinances were designed to communicate to us the benefits of redemption, they are often called the means of grace. "A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein by sen-

* *Confession of Faith*, ch. vii., sects. v. and vi.

sible signs Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers." There are but two sacraments in the New Testament—Baptism and the Lord's Supper.* These are also called "sealing ordinances." †

Who are responsible for the administration of the ordinances?

The Pastor and Session of the particular church. ‡

By whom is prayer to be offered in the church?

The Minister should himself offer the prayers. He may, when he deems it expedient or necessary, call upon one of the Elders of the church or any other fit person to conduct this part of the service. He is, however, always responsible for it. § At the more informal and social church-meetings, as at prayer-meetings and the monthly concert for prayer, "the brethren" (the male communicants) are to take part, under the general supervision of the Pastor. To this they are often urged by the General Assembly, as in the pastoral letters in 1817, 1832, and by the O. S. Assembly in 1849. ‖ "Meetings of pious women by themselves for conversation and prayer, whenever they can conveniently be held, we entirely approve." "To teach and exhort, or to lead in prayer in public and promiscuous assemblies, is clearly forbidden to women in the holy oracles." ¶ In 1874 the Assembly to the overture, "Does the Assembly mean to enjoin that in the regular weekly prayer-meetings of the church no woman shall speak or lead in prayer?" answered, "Yes,

* *Shorter Catechism*, Qq. 88, 92, 93.

† *Directory for Worship*, ch. ix.

‡ *Form of Government*, chs. iv. and xxi.; *Directory for Worship*, chs. iii.-x.

§ *Ibid.*, ch. v., sect. iv.

‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 296, 302, 313.

¶ *Ibid.*, pp. 304, 353.

except in emergencies, to be decided by the Pastor and Session;" and added, "The Assembly expresses no opinion as to the scriptural view of woman's right to speak and pray in the social prayer-meeting, but commits the whole subject to the discretion of the Pastors and Elders of the churches." *

May liturgies be used?

The "Directory for Worship," ch. v., gives direction for extemporary prayer. In 1867 the N. S. Assembly did not deem it necessary to give any deliverance on the use of liturgies, since "the usage and forms of the Presbyterian Church have been so uniform and acceptable for years past from their scriptural simplicity," and no change in these usages is likely to take place. In 1869 the O. S. Assembly declared that "it becomes the Church to withstand the tendency, so strongly manifested in many places, to a liturgical and ritualistic service." † In 1874 the Assembly declared "that the practice of responsive service in the public worship of the sanctuary is without warrant in the New Testament, and is unwise and impolitic, in view of its inevitable tendency to destroy uniformity in our mode of worship." And "the Sessions of the churches are urged to preserve in act and spirit the simplicity indicated in the 'Directory for Worship.'" ‡ Appendix, p. 520.

What is the proper position in prayer?

In 1849 the O. S. Assembly recognized the fact that, according to scriptural example and the practice of the early Church, the proper posture in public prayer is standing, and in private prayer is kneeling—the pos-

* *Minutes General Assembly 1874*, pp. 32, 66.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 656.

‡ *Minutes General Assembly 1874*, p. 83.

ture of sitting was regarded by the early Church as heathenish and irreverent—and therefore resolved, "That the practice (sitting in prayer) be considered grievously improper whenever the infirmities of the worshiper do not render it necessary, and that Ministers be required to reprove it with earnest and persevering admonition." This was reaffirmed in 1857. In 1854 the N. S. Assembly resolved that as the Bible does not enjoin precisely the tunes to be used, the posture to be adopted, or who shall join in the songs of the sanctuary, therefore no action be taken on uniformity in the forms of worship, posture in prayer and singing. In 1870 the Assembly said that action in relation to the posture in prayer and praise is inexpedient.*

Who should take part in singing praises?

This, as every other part of public worship, is under the direction of the Pastor. "The proportion of the time of public worship to be spent in singing is left to the prudence of every Minister." But "it is the duty of Christians to praise God by singing psalms or hymns publicly in the church, as also privately in the family." "The whole congregation should be furnished with books, and ought to join in this part of worship." "It is also proper that we cultivate some knowledge of the rules of music, that we may praise God in a becoming manner with our voices as well as with our hearts."†

Is it proper to have a choir?

The manner in which this important part of worship is to be conducted must be determined by the Session.‡ The custom in the Church of Scotland is to have a Pre-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 646.

† *Directory for Worship*, ch. iv.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. vi.

centor, who occupies a place in front of or near the pulpit, and leads the congregation in singing. This was also the usage in the Presbyterian and some other churches in this country. It has passed away almost entirely until lately, when in some cases it has been re-established. It is more usual to have a trained choir. In 1867 the O. S. Assembly declared that those who lead in singing should be, as far as practicable, only "those who are in communion with the church and amenable to its jurisdiction;" that "the introduction of choirs or musical instruments can be justified only as they serve this end (to inspire and express devotion) and aid or accompany sacred song; and no display of artistic skill, no delicacy of vocal training, no measure of musical ability, compensates for the violation, or even neglect, of the proprieties of divine worship." It recommends that meetings for rehearsal be held on other days than the Sabbath. It reminds the Church "that the Scriptures nowhere recognize the service of song as to be performed by the few in behalf of the many."*

May musical instruments be used?

What has been said above of choirs applies equally to musical instruments. In 1845 the O. S. Assembly replied to an overture, that "whereas by the 'Form of Government' and 'Directory for Worship' the whole internal management of the church as to worship and order is committed to the Minister and Session," therefore no further order is necessary, but to each Session is left "the delicate and important matter of arranging and conducting the music as to them shall seem most for edification, recommending great caution, prudence and forbearance in regard to it."†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 653. † *Ibid.*, p. 654.

Is chanting allowable?

In the various books recommended by the Assemblies (O. S. and N. S.) to be used in the Church many chants are to be found. The committees appointed to prepare hymn-books have, in both branches of the Church, been instructed to make careful selections of the Psalms and of other portions of the Bible to be arranged for chanting.* Similar instructions were given and carried out in the preparation of "The Presbyterian Hymnal," which was adopted by the reunited Church in 1875.†

What books of hymns and music may be used?

The "Directory for Worship," ch. iv., merely states that books should be furnished. As above stated, the whole matter is under the direction of the Session of each church. Yet they should not use the authority arbitrarily, adopting a new book "without the consent of the majority of said congregation" (1753).‡ The General Assemblies have often expressed their opinion of the desirability of having uniformity in the churches in this regard, but have never assumed authority, but have from time to time approved certain books, appointed committees to prepare them, published them by their committees or Boards, and earnestly recommended their use by the churches. At first the Assembly authorized the use of Rouse's version of the Book of Psalms, which is still used by the churches in Scotland and Ireland and in some of the branches of the Presbyterian Church in this country. Watts's "Imitation of the Psalms of David," with his three books of hymns, was afterward recommended. In 1830 "The Book of Psalms and Hymns," prepared by the Assembly, was approved and

* *New Digest*, p. 401; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 652.

† *Minutes 1875*, p. 508. ‡ *New Digest*, p. 108.

recommended. "The Church Psalmist" was adopted in 1843 by the N. S. Assembly. The O. S. Assembly in 1838 ordered a revision of the "Psalms and Hymns," which was made and authorized in 1843. In 1866 "The Hymnal" was approved, and "allowed to be used in all our churches, but it is not required that it shall supersede the books in present use."* The reunited Church prepared and adopted the "Presbyterian Hymnal" in 1875.† Appendix, p. 520.

The introduction of Watts's version of the Psalms and of hymns at first met with much opposition. In 1755 the Synod determined that where Watts's book was adopted the Scotch version should be equally used in the public worship. In 1765 the Synod declared, "That they look on the inspired Psalms in Scripture to be proper matter to be sung in divine worship, according to their original design and the practice of Christian churches, yet will not forbid those to use the imitations of them whose judgment and inclination leads them to do so." In 1787 the Synod stated that while, for many years, they had allowed the use of Watts's book, "they were far from disapproving of Rouse's version, commonly called the Old Psalms," and that they "highly disapprove of public severe and unchristian censures being passed upon either of the systems of psalmody." The next year a Minister formally asked if the churches "have not fallen into a great and pernicious error in the public worship of God by disusing Rouse's versification of David's Psalms, and adopting in the room of it Watts's Imitation?" The Assembly attempted to remove his conscientious scruples, and enjoined him to be careful

* *New Digest*, p. 580; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 207–214; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 647–652.

† *Minutes 1875*, p. 508.

not to disturb the peace of the Church. In 1802 hymns were formally allowed.*

Who may read, expound and preach the word of God?

Pastors, Evangelists, Ministers regularly ordained and in good standing, and Licentiates. "It is expedient that no persons be introduced to preach in any of the churches under our care unless by the consent of the Pastor or church Session."† The above quotation recognized that the Pastor or Session is responsible for the instruction given to the church. The Pastor may invite Ministers and Licentiates to preach for him, whether they belong to the Presbyterian Church or any other whose ordination is recognized by our Church.

Under this same responsibility Pastors sometimes permit Candidates who are somewhat advanced in their studies, but not yet licensed by Presbytery, to try their gifts, in more or less formal expositions and preaching of the word, in their own churches and under their supervision.

In vacant churches the Elders or Deacons may, when a Minister cannot be procured, preside at the public worship, select the portions of Scriptures and of other books to be read, such works of approved divines recommended by Presbytery.‡ The O. S. Assembly in 1856 and 1857 recognized the right of Elders in the absence of the Pastor "to explain the Scriptures, and to endeavor to enforce the truth upon the conscience by suitable exhortations."§

Preaching without a license and lay preaching are regarded by the Assembly as irregular and improper. If men show a calling to the work, they should devote them-

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 207; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 648.

† *Form of Government*, chs. iv., xiv., xv.; *Directory for Worship*, ch. vi., sect. vi.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xxi.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 462.

selves to study, and when prepared should be regularly licensed.*

Women, while encouraged to hold meetings for women, are not to exhort or preach or lead in prayer in promiscuous assemblies, as this "is clearly forbidden in the holy oracles." † This was regarded in 1872 as a sufficient reply to the overture asking "for such rules as shall forbid the licensing and ordaining of women to the gospel ministry and the teaching and preaching of women in our pulpits," etc. ‡ In 1878 the Assembly decided that "the passages of Scripture referred to in the action of the Presbytery (1 Cor. 14 : 33–37 and 1 Tim. 2 : 11–13) do prohibit the fulfilling by women of the offices of Preachers in the regular assemblies of the Church." §

May Ministers read their sermons?

There is no prohibition. Yet in 1761 "it was further enjoined that all our Ministers and Probationers forbear reading their sermons from the pulpit, if they can conveniently;" and the O. S. Assembly in 1841 and 1849 earnestly exhorted our younger Ministers "to adopt a different method (from reading), as more scriptural and effective, and more generally acceptable to God's people." ‖ "This method of preaching requires much study, meditation and prayer. Ministers ought in general to prepare their sermons with care, and not indulge themselves in loose, extemporary harangues, nor to serve God with that which costs them naught," etc. ¶

What is expository preaching?

The explaining and applying larger or smaller pas-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 352.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 304, 353.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1872*, p. 89.
§ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 102.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 657.
¶ *Directory for Worship*, ch. vi., sect. iii.

sages of the word of God. This may be done in the reading of the Scriptures, or in more formal lectures or courses of sermons. "It is proper also that large portions of Scripture be sometimes expounded, and particularly improved, for the instruction of the people in the meaning and use of the Sacred Oracles." This method of preaching was specially commended to Ministers in 1799.*

What is a sacrament?

"A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers." †

How many sacraments are there?

Under the Old Testament there were only two—Circumcision and the Passover (Gen. 17:10; Ex. 12:). "Under the New Testament Christ has instituted in his Church only two sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper." ‡ This is the doctrine of all the Reformed churches. The Romish Church holds that there are seven sacraments—Baptism, Lord's Supper, Matrimony, Orders, Penance, Confirmation and Extreme Unction.

What is baptism?

"Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's." § It is the initiatory rite of the Christian Church, as cir-

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. vi., sect. ii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 657.
† *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 92.
‡ *Larger Catechism*, Q. 164; Matt. 28 : 19 ; 26 : 26, 27.
§ *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 94.

cumcision was of the Jewish Church. They have the same signification and use. Baptism in the New-Testament dispensation has taken the place of circumcision. "The sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were for substance the same with those of the New."* (Col. 2 : 11, 12.) Circumcision is forbidden (Gal. 5 : 2), and baptism is enjoined (Acts 2 : 38).

Who may administer baptism?

In the Romish Church it is usually administered by the Priest, but in emergencies any man, or even a woman, may perform the service. In the Episcopal Church, Deacons may baptize in the absence of the Priest or under his direction. In other Reformed churches, as in our own, baptism is "not to be administered in any case by any private person, but by a Minister of Christ, called to be steward of the mysteries of God."† A Licentiate, not being a Minister, cannot baptize, nor can a Ruling Elder.‡ For the same reason a person deposed from the ministry cannot administer this sacrament; if he attempt it, the service is not valid.§ If a Minister be suspended, he has no right to exercise any of the functions of a Minister. If the suspended Minister performs the rite after he has united with some other Church, and is held there as in good standing, his administrations are to be regarded as those of other denominations.§ The service by an impostor is lay baptism, and therefore invalid.‖ If a Minister be immoral or unworthy of his office, but has not yet been disciplined, his baptisms are to be re-

* *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxvii., sect. v.
† *Directory for Worship*, ch. vii., sect. i.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 117, 663.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 660.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 659.

garded as valid; where there have been great irregularities in the service, the Session should inquire into each case, and refer it to Presbytery for final decision.*

Is the efficacy of baptism affected by the personal character of the administrator?

"The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them."†

Is the baptism of other churches to be recognized?

"It is also a principle, that as long as any denomination of Christians is acknowledged by us as a Church of Christ, we ought to hold the ordinances dispensed by it as valid, notwithstanding the unworthiness of particular Ministers."*

Unitarian baptism was pronounced invalid by the Assembly of 1814. "It is the deliberate and unanimous opinion of this Assembly that those who renounce the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity, and deny that Jesus Christ is the same in substance, equal in power and glory with the Father, cannot be recognized as Ministers of the gospel, and that their administrations are invalid."*

The O. S. Assembly decided in 1864 that baptism by the Campbellites or Disciples is invalid.‡

The O. S. Assembly in 1845 declared that the Romish Church is not a Church of Christ, nor its Priests his Ministers, and therefore its baptism is invalid. In cases

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 659.

† *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 91; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 659.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 660.

of doubt the Session must decide if the applicant must be baptized.* In 1875 our Assembly answered to the question, "Should a convert from Romanism be again baptized?" that "the decision of the question be left to the judgment of each church Session, guided by the principles governing the subject of baptism as laid down in the standards of our Church."† In 1879 it was resolved, "That this Assembly, in full accordance with the words of our 'Confession of Faith' respecting the Church of Rome and its so-called spiritual head, do now reaffirm the deliverance upon this subject of the Assembly of 1835, as applying to that Roman hierarchy, headed by the Pope, falsely claiming to be the Church, which, opposed absolutely and irreconcilably to the doctrines of Holy Scripture, is corrupting and degrading a large part of Christ's Church over which it has usurped supreme control."‡ That deliverance in 1835 declared the papacy to be apostate from Christ and no true Church.§

Who may be baptized?

"Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church till they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him, but infants of such as are members of the visible Church are to be baptized."‖ "Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents, are to be baptized."¶

Suspended church members cannot present their children.

Christian masters and mistresses, who have the right

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 660–663.
† *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 514.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 630.
§ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 560.
‖ *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 95.
¶ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxviii., sect. iv.

to claim baptism for their own children, should also dedicate the children of their servants in that ordinance, "when they have no scruple of conscience to the contrary."

Christian masters should present the infants of their slaves for baptism, "provided they are in a situation to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Christian slaves, having children "at the entire direction of unchristian masters, and not having it in their power to instruct them in religion, are bound to have them baptized."

Orphan children of heathen parents committed to the care of our missions are entitled to the benefits of baptism, when they are "so committed to the missions or other Christian tuition as to secure effectually their entire religious education," and "have not attained to years of discretion." So the O. S. Assembly determined in 1843.

Ministers should carefully examine persons applying to have their children baptized, that they are of a regular life and have suitable acquaintance with the principles of Christianity, that the seal be not set to a blank, and that such be not admitted to the Church who are manifestly unfit.*

May baptized parents, not communicants, obtain baptism for their children?

In the constitution of the Church the term "member of the visible Church," when unqualified, means members in full and regular standing—that is, communicants. Others are called "baptized members," "suspended members," "absent members," etc. Baptism is an act of faith;

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 664, 665.

a profession of faith is therefore necessary. The Assembly was asked to give some precise direction and definition of the credible profession of Christianity required, but replied that it was unnecessary to deliver rules more explicit than those in the constitution. Cases of difficulty or doubt must be determined separately by the proper judicatories.*

At what age may infants be baptized?

"Baptism is not to be unnecessarily delayed."† The precise time when infancy ceases is not determined by the word of God nor the standards of the Church. Sessions and Ministers may determine when a child is too old to be baptized on the faith of the parents.‡

May a person be baptized on a general profession of faith?

The N. S. Assembly in 1860 decided that a profession of faith in Christ and of obedience to him is all that is required of those who apply for baptism. "Hence cases may occur in which, as in the case of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, it may be proper to baptize a person who does not expect immediately to connect himself with any particular church;" but in ordinary cases baptism should "constitute his initiation into the visible Church and into some particular branch of it."§

The O. S. Assembly in 1864 was asked if a member of the Friends' Society, determined to continue his connection therewith, may be baptized on the profession that "Jesus is the Son of God," and that he holds the essential doctrines of the Christian religion. The answer given was a reference to the "Larger" and "Shorter

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 665, 666.
† *Directory for Worship*, ch. vii., sect. i
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 658. § *Ibid.*, p. 677.

Catechisms:" "Q. To whom is baptism to be administered?"*

What are god-parents?

In the Episcopal Church the infant is presented for baptism by persons called god-parents and sponsors, who make the vows for the child, and, in its name, renounce the devil, world and flesh, adopt all the articles of the Christian faith, and promise obediently to keep God's holy will and commandments. A male child must have two godfathers and one godmother; and a female child one godfather and two godmothers. "The parents shall be admitted as sponsors if it be desired."† All children are baptized if the Priest be satisfied with the god-parents. These need have no relationship to the child, and often are not communicants, and have no control over the child. In the Reformed Episcopal Church god-parents are not recognized. "Infants must be presented by their parents, when practicable, and one at least of the persons presenting must be a communicant of this or of some other evangelical Church." The vows are made by the parents, that they have faith, and that they will bring up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.‡ This is true also of the Methodist Episcopal Church.§

Who may present children for baptism in other churches?

In the Congregational Church the custom is as in our Church. Formerly the "half-way covenant" was recognized; that is, parents who have been baptized, but who do not profess personal faith, were permitted to present their children for baptism on a declaration of their

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 677. † *The Book of Common Prayer.*
‡ *Book of Common Prayer of the Reformed Episcopal Church.*
§ *Discipline* (1880), ¶ 491.

conviction of the truth of Christianity, and of their desire that their children be brought up under its influence, and on their engagement to instruct them and set before them a good example. This, however, has generally been discarded.

In the Baptist churches baptism is administered only to adults on the profession of their own faith and vows. The form is by immersion. No other baptism is recognized by them. In this country the Baptist churches hold to close communion; that is, they do not receive persons of other churches to their communion, and often forbid their members communing in other churches.

Does excommunication of a church member vitiate his baptism? and on his restoration should he be rebaptized?

The Assembly of 1881 answered both questions in the negative.*

How is baptism to be administered?

"Washing with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."† "Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person."‡ "He is to baptize the child with water, by pouring or sprinkling it on the face of the child, without adding any other ceremony; and the whole shall be concluded with prayer."§ In 1834 the Assembly was asked, "Is it expedient, in the present state of the Church, for a Presbyterian Minister to baptize by immersion in any case?" and replied, that it saw no cause for adding anything to the doctrine of the Confession on this subject.‖

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 586. † *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 94.
‡ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxviii., sect. iii.
§ *Directory for Worship*, ch. vii., sect. v.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 667.

Where may baptism be administered?

"It is usually to be administered in the church, in the presence of the congregation; and it is convenient that it be performed immediately after sermon."* (The more general custom now is to have the baptism before the sermon.) "Although it is proper that baptism be administered in the presence of the congregation, yet there may be cases when it will be expedient to administer this ordinance in private houses; of which the Minister is to be the judge."†

What is the Lord's Supper?

"The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace."‡ It was substituted by Christ for the passover of the Old-Testament Church (Matt. 26 : 17–30).

Who may administer the Lord's Supper?

"Neither of which (baptism nor the Lord's Supper) may be dispensed by any but by a Minister of the word lawfully ordained."§

Who may be admitted to the Lord's Supper?

Communicants in good and regular standing. But the ignorant, the profane, the scandalous, and those who secretly indulge in any known sin, are to be warned not to come to the Lord's table.‖ Persons under charges

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. vii., sect. ii. † *Ibid.*, sect. v.

‡ *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 96.

§ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxvii., sect. iv. See p. 83.

‖ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxix., sect. viii.; *Larger Catechism*, Q. 173; *Directory for Worship*, ch. viii., sect. iv.

may be prevented, by the order of Session, from communing until the charges can be examined.* Communicants may also be advised by the Session not to partake whenever it is deemed expedient for their edification or that of the church that such advice be given. Persons professing faith in the Lord Jesus, and obedience to him, are to be received by the Session into the membership of the church, and welcomed to the communion. Members in good and regular standing in other churches are also to be received by the Session, on the presentation of proper certificates of dismission.† "The years of discretion in young Christians cannot be precisely fixed. This must be left to the prudence of the eldership. The officers of the church are the judges of the qualifications of those to be admitted to sealing ordinances, and of the time when it is proper to admit young Christians to them."‡

It is customary to invite all Christians present to unite in the service who are in good and regular standing in other evangelical churches. But "it is not in accordance with the spirit and usage of the Presbyterian Church to extend such invitations" to persons who are not members of any evangelical Church.§ "The language of the book ("Directory for Worship," ch. viii., sect. iv.) relied upon by some to authorize indiscriminate communion is not correctly interpreted by them. Although in describing the persons there invited to the Lord's table church-membership is not expressed, it is clearly implied."‖

What are tokens?

Tokens are pieces of metal, bone or cardboard, some-

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv., sect. xviii.

† *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. vi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 130.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. ix., sect. ii. See p. 136.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 669. ‖ *Minutes G. A. 1876*, p. 79.

times with a text of Scripture written thereon, which were formerly in this country, and still are in Scotland and Ireland, given by the Session to each communicant before the administration of the Lord's Supper, to indicate the approval by the Session of their presence at the table.

What kind of wine may be used?

In answer to several overtures on communion wine, the Assembly answered, "that the control of this matter be left to the Sessions of the several churches, with the earnest recommendation that the purest wine attainable be used." * In 1881 the Assembly was asked "if the use of fermented wine is necessary to the proper observance of the Lord's Supper, and if our churches are at liberty to use unfermented wine if they can get it," and replied, "The General Assembly has always recognized the right of each church Session to determine what is bread and what is wine." "No new legislation is needed on the subject." †

Where may the Lord's Supper be administered?

In the church, on the Sabbath, after due notice and after some preparatory service. ‡

"It was moved that the restriction laid by the last General Assembly on our Missionaries, which confines them to adminster the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in such places only where there are church officers regularly appointed, be repealed, and it is hereby repealed accordingly" (1798).

As a general principle, a Minister may not administer the communion within the bounds of a congregation with which he is not connected, without the consent of the Minister and Session; yet there may be exceptions under peculiar circumstances.

* *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 542. † *Ibid., 1881*, p. 548.
‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. viii., sect. iii.

The O. S. Assembly in 1863, while reasserting the doctrine of the "Confession of Faith," ch. xxix., sect. iv., that the "receiving of this sacrament by a Priest or any other alone" is "contrary to the nature of this sacrament and to the institution of Christ," yet in cases of protracted sickness or approaching death, the Pastor, with an Elder, may adminster the sacrament to the sick and other communicants, having given proper instruction concerning the ordinance. A record of the fact must be entered on the minutes of the Session.*

How frequently should the sacrament be administered?

"It is to be celebrated frequently, but how often may be determined by the Minister and eldership of each congregation, as they may judge most for edification."†

Should days for fasting and thanksgiving be observed?

"It has been customary, in some parts of our church, to observe a fast before the Lord's Supper." "There is no day, under the gospel, commanded to be kept holy, except the Lord's Day, which is the Christian Sabbath. Nevertheless, to observe days of fasting and thanksgiving, as the extraordinary dispensations of Divine Providence may direct, we judge both scriptural and rational."‡

Who may appoint such days?

"It must be left to the judgment and discretion of every Christian and family to determine when it is proper to observe a private fast or thanksgiving, and to the church Session to determine for particular congregations, and to Presbyteries and Synods to determine for larger districts. When it is deemed expedient that a fast or thanksgiving

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 667, 668.

† *Directory for Worship*, ch. viii., sect. i.

‡ *Ibid.*, ch. viii., sect. vi.; ch. xiv., sects. i. and ii.

should be general, the call of it must be judged of by the Synod or General Assembly. And if at any time the civil power should think it proper to appoint a fast or thanksgiving, it is the duty of the Ministers and people of our communion, as we live under a Christian government, to pay all due respect to the same." *

Days of fasting were appointed by the Synod in 1756 on the occasion of the French war, on the war with Spain in 1762, on account of the troubles with England in 1777–80, by the Assembly before and during the second war with England in 1808–14, by the O. S. and N. S. Assemblies on the outbreak of the civil war in 1861.

Days of prayer have been appointed by the Church for the observance of the Sabbath, the conversion of the world, etc.

The World's Week of Prayer, the first week in January, for the conversion of the world, has been appointed annually since 1859, until "the custom has come to have almost the force of law." † In 1880 there was some dissatisfaction manifested in the choice made by the committee of the Evangelical Alliance of subjects for the Week of Prayer, and a special committee was appointed to propose subjects to be recommended by the Assembly. This was done. ‡ The next year the Assembly declined to propose subjects, but determined to follow the programme annually set forth by the Evangelical Alliance, and ordered a request to be "forwarded in due season from this General Assembly to said committee of the Alliance that, in making out their programme for the Week of Prayer, they would recognize, as the supreme object of prayer, the

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. xiv., sect. iv.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 697–702. ‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 51.

influence of the Holy Spirit in the particular objects proposed for each day."*

The last Thursday in January has been observed as a day for prayer for colleges and seminaries, for the conversion of the baptized members of the Church and the increase of the ministry. Formerly the last Thursday of February was appointed.†

In New England an annual fast day is yearly appointed by the governors of the several States, and since the close of the late civil war the President of the United States and the governors of the different States appoint a day in November as a day of thanksgiving.

Is marriage a sacrament?

"Marriage is not a sacrament, nor peculiar to the Church of Christ. It is proper that every commonwealth, for the good of society, make laws to regulate marriage which all citizens are bound to obey."‡

Who may perform the service?

"It should be solemnized by a lawful Minister."§ "While our 'Form of Government' does not recognize Licentiates as Ministers of the gospel, yet this Assembly do not consider them as violating any rules of the Church by solemnizing marriage in those States where the civil laws expressly authorize them to do it." So the O. S. Assembly decided in 1844.‖ Marriage performed by civil officers, or otherwise according to the laws of the commonwealth, while not approved by our Church, are nevertheless to be recognized; as the marriage before a magistrate or among the Society of

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 580.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 701; *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 580.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. xi., sect. i. § *Ibid.*, sect. ii.

‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 681.

Friends, where there is only a formal public announcement of intention and signing of a certificate. Ministers should be careful to inform themselves of the laws of the State in regard to marriage and license, and to observe them. In some States marriage is unlawful if performed by a Minister who is not a resident of the State. Special care should be taken in regard to minors desiring to be married.

Who may be married?

"Christians ought to marry in the Lord."* "It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with judgment to give their consent, yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord." "Such as profess the true Reformed religion should not marry with infidels, papists or other idolaters; neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life or maintain damnable heresies."†

"The parties ought to be of such years of discretion as to be capable of making their own choice; and if they be under age, or live with their parents, the consent of the parents, or others under whose care they are, ought to be previously obtained, and well certified to the Minister before he proceeds to solemnize the marriage. Parents ought not to compel their children to marry contrary to their inclinations, nor deny their consent without just and important reasons."‡

In 1850 the O. S. Assembly was asked by the Presbytery of Ningpo in regard to marriages of professed Christians with heathen. The overtures were referred

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. xi., sect. ii.

† *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxiv., sect. iii.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. xi., sects. iv. and v.

back to the Presbytery, but the committee recommended an answer which does not seem to have been adopted by the Assembly—that it is not to be regarded, in the circumstances, "as sinful universally and necessarily for a Christian to marry a heathen," nor as rendering him liable to discipline, except in circumstances of which the missionaries must be the best judges.*

Who are forbidden to marry?

"Marriage is to be between one man and one woman only; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time."†

The Assembly in 1879 recorded its grateful acknowledgment to God that "by a recent decision of the Supreme Court of the United States the sin of polygamy has been declared to be a criminal offence against the Constitution and the laws of our country, and that under it prosecution and conviction have followed," and appealed "to the patriotic Christian men and women of our land to use their united influence in support of that public sentiment, now formulated into legal enactment, which has exposed the pretence of this monstrous practice to be a religious observance, and which justly holds it to companionship with other vices which are the contempt and abhorrence of mankind."‡ In 1881 the Assembly repeated its testimony against this enormous wickedness, and added: "1. We therefore, as an Assembly, solemnly protest before God and before men against this heinous and abominable crime as a foul blot on the face of our country, for the existence of which God will hold the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 682.

† *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxiv., sect. i.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 586.

nation to account, and for which he will surely call it into judgment except the evil be speedily abated." 2. "We rejoice in the determination of the President of the United States, as expressed in his Inaugural Address, to deal vigorously with this iniquity; and we assure him of our sympathy and support in all lawful and just efforts for its extinction, praying him not to withhold his hand." 3. "We reiterate our hearty approval of the stand taken by Governor Murray of Utah and his counselors, and by the United States courts of the Territory, in hostility to polygamous marriages." 4. "We memorialize the National Legislature to enact whatever laws may seem most wise and most efficient for the utter obliteration of this vice, whether as an organized system or as an individual practice." 5. "And we urge our own members, without respect to party lines, zealously to exert their influence, in every lawful method, for the enactment of an amendment to the National Constitution that shall for ever prohibit the existence of polygamy in the nation." This action was ordered to be sent to the President and Congress, "as conveying the unanimous sentiment of the ministry and membership of the Presbyterian Church in the United States."*

A man whose wife is living may not marry, even though for ten years she refuses to follow him to this country and to recognize him as her husband. If, however, he can clearly prove to the Session that he has scriptural grounds for divorce, and has been unjustly refused by the civil courts, he may marry and may be admitted to church privileges. "But in such case it is necessary that the most authentic evidence be required and great caution be used, both that the proceedings of

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 550.

the Church may not be inconsistent with the civil law, and that a door be not opened to laxness on this important subject of morals." *

A man uncertain (or without satisfactory proof) of the first wife's death may not marry again. A Minister having thus married may not officiate as a Minister until he obtain satisfactory proof of his wife's death.†

In 1875 the Assembly was asked what should be done with a heathen convert who has two wives, and answered that bigamy "cannot be perpetuated by one who has become a follower of Christ, neither can it be justified by his Church. Converts from heathenism should be treated very tenderly in this most painful situation, and yet they should be dealt with in all fidelity; and when a converted man is called on to separate from all but his first and only wife, he should be enjoined to make suitable provision for her support that is put away, and for her children, if she have any, to the full extent of his ability." ‡

Divorced persons may not marry unless the divorce has been obtained on scriptural grounds, which our "Confession of Faith" (ch. xxiv., sect. vi.) says to be "nothing but adultery or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate." So the N. S. Assembly has determined in the case of two Ministers, ratifying the action of Presbytery in deposing and excommunicating them. §

Drunkenness, abuse, neglect, incompatibility of disposition, etc. are not sufficient cause for divorce. Nor is it sufficient that scriptural grounds are known to exist: they must be alleged and proved as the reasons

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 683.
† *Ibid.*, p. 682.
‡ *Minutes G. A.*, p. 507.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 684.

on account of which the divorce is granted.* To the question, "Whether on full proof of adultery by one party the Presbytery has a right to declare the marriage so far void as that the innocent party may marry again without being liable to church censure?" the Synod in 1785 replied in the affirmative, but only by a small majority.† The "Confession of Faith" (ch. xxiv., sect. v.) says: "In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and after the divorce to marry another as if the offending party were dead." It would seem, therefore, that the guilty party could not marry again. This is the opinion of very many, and is sometimes stated by the civil courts. Others assert that divorce so dissolves the marriage that both parties are free to marry.

Persons may not marry who are "within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity prohibited in the word of God."‡ "Nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife. The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own, nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than of her own."§ The Synod or Assembly has judicially decided that the following marriages are unlawful, and render the parties liable to discipline:

1. Marriage with a brother's widow. But in a case where the marriage had been contracted above fifteen years the Assembly deemed it inexpedient to express any opinion, but referred the case to the Session, "to act ac-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 684. † *Ibid.*, p. 683.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. xi., sect. iii.

§ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxiv., sect. iv.

cording to their own best light and the circumstances in which they find themselves placed."

2. Marriage with a wife's brother's daughter. This is not, in express terms, forbidden by the Levitical law, "yet as it is contrary to the custom of Protestant nations in general, and an evidence of great untenderness, and so opposite to such precepts of the gospel as require Christians to avoid things of ill report and all appearance of evil, and what is offensive to the Church," the persons should be rebuked by the Session, and others warned against such offensive conduct. If they submit to the rebuke and are in other respects regular professors, they are not to be debarred from church privileges.

3. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister's daughter. Such a union is declared "not to be forbidden by the laws of God," but "contrary to the general practice of Protestant churches and the feelings and opinions of many serious Christians among ourselves, and therefore ought to be discountenanced." Such cases are referred to the several judicatories.

4. Marriage with a sister's daughter. "Such a connection demands the judicial action of the Church, and if not repented of should incur church censure." *

5. Marriage of the relicts of a brother and of a sister. This is inexpedient, but not prohibited by the Levitical law.

6. Marriage with a half-brother's widow. In 1760 the majority of the Synod thought that this relation was contrary to the laws of God and of the land, and of a sinful and dangerous tendency; but as some learned members were not so clear on this point, the decision was deferred for the year, when it was decided to be

* *Decision of N. S. Assembly in 1853.*

unlawful, and demanding suspension from the communion while the relation was continued.*

7. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister. This has been frequently before the Church. In 1761 it was decided to be contrary to the Levitical law and the civil laws of the land, and worthy of church discipline. In 1783 the Synod decided "that although it may not be a direct violation of the express words of that (Levitical) law, yet as it is contrary to the practice of the Protestant Church in general, and an evidence of great untenderness toward many serious and well-disposed Christians, and may, through the prejudices or generally received opinions of the members of our Church, be productive of many disagreeable consequences, the persons contracting such marriages are highly censurable, and the practice ought to be disallowed in express terms by the Synod; and we do therefore condemn such marriages as imprudent and unseasonable. Yet as some things may be done very imprudently and unseasonably which when done ought not to be annulled, we are of the opinion that it is not necessary that the persons whom this judgment respects to separate from one another." Yet they must be solemnly admonished by the Session before they be received to the communion. The Synod recommended its members to abstain from solemnizing such marriages, and to discountenance them. In 1821 the marriage with a deceased wife's sister and all similar connections were declared to be "highly inexpedient, unfriendly to domestic purity and exceedingly offensive to a large portion of our churches." Yet the Assembly was by "no means prepared to decide that such marriages as that in question are so plainly prohibited in Scripture, and so undoubtedly incestuous, as necessarily to infer the

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 300, 303, 312.

exclusion of those who contract them from church privileges." The case was referred back to the Session. In 1826 one appealed from the decision of Presbytery suspending him from the communion for marrying his deceased wife's sister. The Assembly refused to sustain his appeal, on the ground that until the "Confession of Faith" (ch. xxiv., sect. iv.) was altered the sentence must stand. The Presbyteries, by a vote of 50 against 18, refused to erase the section. In 1842 the O. S. Assembly affirmed the decision of a Presbytery suspending a Minister from his office and from the communion of the Church for this offence. Three years later it granted the prayer of a memorial recommending the Presbytery to restore him to the communion and the ministry, as the ends of discipline in his case have been attained. In 1848 the O. S. Assembly refused to sustain the appeal of a man who was suspended from the church for marrying his deceased wife's sister. In 1879 the Assembly, in answer to overtures proposing that constitutional steps be taken "toward amending the 'Confession of Faith,' by the omission of the sentence which covers the matter of the marriage of a deceased wife's sister," resolved, "That in the judgment of the Assembly it is not advisable at this time to take any action on this much-disputed subject." *

Should divorces be discouraged?

"Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage, yet nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dis-

* *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 624. For the above decisions see *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 685-691.

solving the bond of marriage; wherein a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed, and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in the case."* The O. S. and N. S. Assemblies frequently called attention to the alarming tendency in some parts of the land to disregard the sacredness of the marriage-tie, and expressed their "abhorrence of any attempt to diminish its sanctity or to extend beyond the warrant of the Holy Scriptures the grounds of divorce."† In 1872 the Assembly uttered "its solemn protest against such loose opinions (on marriage and divorce, practically demoralizing), and calls upon all its Ministers to use their moral influence to create a more healthy sentiment in the community and a thoroughly scriptural practice in the Church."‡ In 1874 the Assembly reaffirmed the deliverance of the O. S. Assembly of 1869, expressing pain at the increasing prevalence of unscriptural views of the marriage relation, in consequence of which the obligations are often disregarded, and separations of husband and wife and divorces for slight and unwarrantable reasons are becoming more frequent every year. Ministers are urged to give proper instruction to their people, and are warned not to join in marriage any who are divorced on unscriptural grounds.

What is fœticide?

The destruction of an unborn child. The deliverance of the O. S. Assembly in 1869, reaffirmed by the Assembly of 1874, speaks of this crime as well as of divorce: "Nor can we shut our eyes to the fact that the horrible crime of infanticide, especially in the form of destruction by parents of their own offspring before birth, also pre-

* *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxiv., sect. vi.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 494, 684.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 691.

vails to an alarming extent." The Assembly regards this "with abhorrence, as a crime against God and against nature; and as the frequency of such murders can no longer be concealed, we hereby warn those that are guilty of this crime that except they repent they cannot inherit eternal life." "All who seek to avoid the responsibilities and cares connected with bringing up children not only deprive themselves of one of the greatest blessings of life, and fly in the face of God's decrees, but do violence to their own natures, and will be found out of their sins even in this world."*

How are clandestine marriages to be regarded?

Ministers are to use great caution not to countenance them, especially when they have reason to suspect that the consent of parents or guardians is withheld.†

May an engagement of marriage be broken?

The parties "may lawfully agree to release each other from the promise." But rash engagements and unwarrantable methods of engaging are culpable; and in 1750 a public rebuke was administered by the Synod.‡

Should the purpose of marriage be published?

"Marriage is of public nature. The welfare of civil society, the happiness of families and the credit of religion are deeply interested in it. Therefore the purpose of marriage ought to be sufficiently published a proper time previously to the solemnization of it."§ The Assembly was asked in 1820 what was a sufficient publication of the purpose of marriage, and replied that "the Presbyteries are the best judges in the case."† In the old countries, and formerly in this, the bans were

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 26; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 494, 495.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 691. ‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 189.
§ *Directory for Worship*, ch. xi., sect. vi.

published in the church at least twice before the marriage could take place. At present an acknowledgment of the engagement in both families and among those interested is considered sufficient publication.

What Catechisms have been adopted by the Church?

"The 'Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly of Divines' are included in, and do constitute an integral part of, the standards of this Church." This was distinctly affirmed in the adopting act in 1729 and 1788; it was reasserted in 1832. These Catechisms were recognized as part of the standards during the separation of the O. S. and N. S. branches; they formed part of the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis at the reunion; and in 1872 the Assembly approved "of the revised copy of the 'Shorter Catechism,' with the ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer and Creed, presented by the Board of Publication, and hereby adopt the same as the standard edition of our Church."*

In 1870 the Assembly recognized the "Heidelberg Catechism" as "a valuable scriptural compendium of Christian doctrine and duty," and approved of its use for the instruction of children by those churches which may desire it.†

Who should be taught the Catechisms?

Parents are exhorted at the baptism of their children to the careful performance of their duty in teaching them in the principles of our holy religion. And the Catechisms are commended to them as excellent summaries of doctrine, and as important helps in their performance of this duty.‡

Baptized children "are under the inspection and gov-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 45, 56, 91. † *Ibid.*, p. 56.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. vii., sect. iv.

ernment of the Church, and are to be taught to read and repeat the Catechism, etc." *

This has been frequently insisted upon by both branches of the Church, and by the reunited Church.†

All the children and youth in the Sabbath-schools should be thus taught. In 1878 the Assembly recommended the Board of Publication to incorporate in its system of Sabbath-school lesson-papers a brief exposition of the answers of the "Shorter Catechism," and through the Sessions urged on teachers and parents the duty of teaching to the children the doctrinal and governmental truths of our Church.‡

Candidates for licensure were required by the O. S. Assembly in 1868 to be well versed in the "Shorter Catechism," and in 1877 the Assembly resolved that all Candidates under the care of the Board commit to memory the whole Catechism.§

By whom should the Catechism be taught?

By parents, Sabbath-school teachers, and by the Pastors and Elders.§ The N. S. Assembly in 1849 declared "that the institution of Sabbath-schools does not exonerate ministers and parents from the duty of teaching the 'Shorter Catechism' to the children of the Church." All Ministers and Elders were urged to teach diligently the youth in the "Shorter Catechism," which was recommended as a text-book in the Sabbath-school.‖ Similar deliverances were made by the O. S. Assembly in 1840, 1846, 1854.¶ And in 1870 the Assembly re-

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. ix., sect. i.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 642, 643, 673, 705.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 31.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 398; *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 535.

‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 642.

¶ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 183, 185, 186.

minded parents that no instruction in the Sabbath-school or elsewhere can supersede or supply their duty of catechising their children.*

The custom in Scotland, and to some extent in this country, was for the Pastor, with one or more Elders, to visit in turn the different districts of the congregation and catechise the families in their several houses or in some place of meeting. This usage has given place in this country to that of an annual or quarterly catechising of the children by the Pastor, or of giving regular instruction to the Sabbath-school each Sabbath in one or more answers in the "Shorter Catechism."

When should this instruction be given?

"Let the heads of families be careful to instruct their children and servants in the principles of religion. . . . We are of opinion that the Sabbath evenings after public worship should be sacredly preserved for this purpose." †

What is a Catechist?

Catechists are pious men, laymen, not generally Candidates for the ministry, but formally authorized to instruct the ignorant in the principles of religion as set forth in the Catechism. In 1800 it was proposed that an order of men called Catechists be employed among the Indians, the blacks and other ignorant persons. These Catechists were to be examined by Presbytery, and receive a certificate and recommendation, without which they should not be recognized. The Assembly refused to take immediate action, but considered it expedient that no Catechist should be sent out without further orders from the Assembly. In 1806 the plan of licensing uneducated men as

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 705.

† *Directory for Worship*, ch. xv., sect. v.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 703–705.

Catechists proposed by Rev. David Rice was not sanctioned by the Assembly, as it was considered "dangerous to the Church to employ illiterate men as exhorters or catechetical instructors." *

What is a Catechumen?

A Catechumen is one under catechetical instruction. In the early Church the applicants for baptism were, by the imposition of hands and the sign of the cross, recognized as such, and were placed under systematic instruction in the doctrines of Christianity. They were called Catechumens.

What collections should be taken in the church?

"*Making collections for the poor and other pious purposes.*" Provision was made for the poor in the Old-Testament dispensation (Ex. 23 : 9–11; Lev. 19 : 10). The first impulse of the Christian Church was to part their possessions and goods to all men as every man had need (Acts 2 : 45). The Apostles, in giving the right hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas as they departed to their mission to the heathen, charged them to remember the poor, which Paul was forward to do (Gal. 2 : 10). The first general collection of which we read was for the poor saints in Jerusalem (Rom. 15 : 24–27). The duty of contributing to the support of Ministers and for the extension of the Church in its various operations is enforced frequently, as in Matt. 10 : 10; Rom. 10 : 15; 15 : 27; 1 Cor. 9 : 7–14.

In the Presbyterian Church the Deacons are ordained to receive and distribute the poor fund.† As early as 1707 the General Presbytery called the attention of the Church to missions. At the first meeting of the Synod (1717) a fund was raised for pious uses—missionary

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 349, 350.

† See p. 63.

operations. All churches were recommended to take yearly collections for its increase.* The General Assembly has divided the general work of the Church, and appointed various Boards or Standing Committees to take the supervision of the several parts. These have been recommended to the confidence of the churches, which are enjoined to make yearly contributions to them. In 1755 the Synod declared that it is inconsistent with our church government for the Session to prohibit the synodical appointments concerning collections. This was repeated in 1790.† In 1872 the Assembly enjoined "upon all the churches the practice of periodical giving to all the causes recommended by the General Assembly, according to the principles commended by the word of God." The Presbyteries were required to question its Pastors if the directions of the Assembly had been complied with. And no church neglecting to contribute to the several Boards should receive aid from the funds of the Church.‡ In 1879 the Assembly declared that "the members of all our congregations have a right to an opportunity to contribute at least once a year to each of the Boards, as required by the highest authority of the Church, and the Sessions of the churches have no right to withhold that opportunity"—"that it is the duty of each Minister in charge to give information, set forth the privilege of giving, and urge the claims of each Board in connection with the annual collection."§

Besides these permanent objects of benevolence the Assembly, Synod and Presbytery may recommend from

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 321, 323.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 131.
‡ *Ibid.* p. 455.
§ *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 623.

time to time others which are not directly under the supervision of the Church, as Bible, tract and colonization societies, colleges and seminaries, etc.* Church Sessions also may order whatever collections they may deem proper to be taken in churches under their care. This is implied in the powers granted to Sessions in "Form of Government" (ch. ix., sect. vi.) and in all the recommendations of the Assembly to the Sessions in regard to collections.†

What is discipline?

"Discipline is the exercise of that authority and the application of that system of laws which the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed in his Church."‡ The Southern Presbyterian Church says that the "term has two senses, the one referring to the whole government, instruction, training, guardianship and control which the Church maintains over its members, its officers and its courts, and the other a restricted and technical sense, signifying judicial prosecution."§

Who are subjects of church discipline?

All communicants are subjects of discipline. "All baptized persons are members of the church, are under its care and subject to its government and discipline; and when they arrive at the years of discretion they are bound to perform all the duties of church members."‖ In 1878 "the Assembly solemnly reminded the churches in our connection that church discipline, in the scriptural

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 413, 826; *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 248; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 373. † See p. 64.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, ch. i., sect. i. See p. 155.

§ *Book of Church Order*, Part II., ch. i., sect. i.

‖ *Book of Discipline*, ch. i., sects. iii. and vi. This latter section was regarded in 1809 by the Assembly as "specifying various and important particulars in which that inspection and government should be exercised."—*Presbyterian Digest*, p. 671.

sense, includes not only the reformation of offenders and the removal of scandals, but also the prevention of offences by the proper instruction and training of the children of the Church in knowledge and godliness; and that to this end it is the duty of the Pastor and Sessions to take authoritative supervision of the instruction of youth, so far as to see to it that the baptized children of the Church are properly instructed in the family and Sabbath-school."*

The question, however, has often been asked, How far and in what sense are those persons who were baptized in infancy, but are non-communicants, subject to church discipline? In 1799 the public standards were considered to contain a sufficient answer. It has several times been referred to the serious consideration of Ministers and Presbyteries, and to learned committees, whose reports have been indefinitely postponed. No authoritative answer has been given. The theory of many is that these persons are subject to church discipline in the same sense that communicants are.† This is denied by others. The usage is, that the baptized non-communicants are subjects of the discipline (teaching) of the Church, as is described in the "Directory for Worship" (ch. ix., sect. i.), but are not liable to judicial prosecution. This is distinctly stated by the Southern Church: "In the one sense (inspection, training, guardianship and control) all baptized persons, being members of the Church, are subject to its discipline and entitled to the benefits thereof; but in the other (judicial prosecution) it refers only to those who have made a profession of their faith in Christ."‡ The second chapter of their "Book of Church Order" is devoted to "The Discipline of Non-communicating Mem-

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, pp. 25, 26. † See p. 132.

‡ *Book of Church Order*, Part II., ch. i., sect. ii.

bers," in which is described the oversight they should receive. "If they exhibit a wayward disposition and associate themselves with the profane, the Church should still cherish them in faith, and ought to use all such means as the word of God warrants and the Christian prudence of church officers shall dictate, for reclaiming them and bringing them to appreciate their covenant privileges and to discharge their covenant obligations." Those "who submit with meekness and gratitude to the government and instruction of the Church are entitled to special attention."

To what judicatories are persons primarily responsible?

Baptized members and communicants are primarily responsible to the Session of the church to which they belong.* A dismissed member committing an offence before presenting his certificate is under the jurisdiction of the church dismissing him, but if his offence becomes known after he unites with another church, that church shall try him.† Members under censure or sentence remain under the care of the Session which tried them.‡ Ruling Elders and Deacons are communicants, and are therefore subject to the Session. Yet under certain circumstances an Elder may be tried by the Presbytery.§ Candidates and Licentiates, though under the care of the Presbytery as to their studies, are yet members of a particular church, and are therefore responsible to the Session for their Christian character and conduct.‖

All Ministers are primarily responsible to the Presbyteries to which they belong.¶

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 127. See p. 130.

† *Book of Discipline*, ch. x., sects. i. and iii.

‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. x., sect. iv.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 128.

§ See p. 58. ‖ See p. 130. ¶ See p. 204.

Who may pronounce the benediction?

"The benediction is an authoritative blessing of the people of God in the name of Christ. It partakes partly of the nature of a prayer, and partly of the declaration of the will and purpose of God. . . . When the form is used by Licentiates or others, its nature is changed, and it assumes the character of a prayer merely. It is doubted by some whether the form should ever be used by Licentiates. Our Church has not, however, given any deliverance on the subject." Such is a note in the "Assembly's Digest," p. 108. It is evidently a ministerial act, and is so regarded in all denominations. Licentiates are not Ministers.* In the "Form of Government" it is frequently referred to, but only as pronounced by Ministers.†

CHAPTER VIII.

OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT, AND THE SEVERAL KINDS OF JUDICATORIES.

I. Is a definite form of government necessary?

"*It is absolutely necessary that the government of the Church be exercised under some certain and definite form.*" This is evidently as necessary in the Church as in the State. If laws are to be obeyed and executed, they must be definite and known. No individual, much less a body of men, can be governed by general and changing opinions or principles. God has given, there-

* See p. 325.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xii., sect. viii.; ch. xv., sect. xiv.; *Directory for Worship*, ch. vi., sect. v.; ch. viii., sect. v.; ch. x., sect. viii.; *The General Rules for Judicatories*, xliii.

fore, a definite law, forms of worship and government.* What God has appointed cannot be unnecessary. Those societies or churches which have no definite form of government are in frequent confusion and trouble (Ezek. 43 : 11, 12; 2 Tim. 1 : 13; Gal. 6 : 16; Phil. 3 : 16).†

Where should we look for a form of church government?

We should look to expediency, to the nature of the Church as the kingdom of Christ, to the Scriptures—especially of the New Testament—and to the practice of the primitive Church and of those churches which were not corrupted. "*We hold it to be expedient, and agreeable to Scripture and the practice of the primitive Christians, that the Church be governed by congregational, presbyterial and synodical assemblies.*"

What form of church government is thus taught?

Expediency, the nature of the Church, the Scriptures and the practice of the early Church, we hold, unite in teaching the Presbyterian form of church government; that is, that the Church should be governed by courts composed of Ministers, all of the same order, and of Elders, representing the people, chosen by them, ordained to their office and having an equal voice in all questions with the Ministers; and that these courts should be congregational, presbyterial and synodical assemblies, the smaller being subject to the larger, and all to that body which represents the whole Church (Matt. 18 : 15–20; Acts 15 : 2–28; 1 Cor. 5 : 4; 1 Tim. 4 : 14).‡

* See the ten commandments, the ceremonial law and the government under Elders in the Old Dispensation, and in the New Testament the definite qualifications and duties of church officers and courts, and the laws to be administered and the penalties to be inflicted. † See p. 30. ‡ *What is Presbyterianism?* pp. 8–76.

Is this form of government essential to the being of a Church?

No. "The Church consists of all those persons in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ and of submission to his laws." Their faith, confession and submission may all be imperfect, as in every case they are, yet they are members of the Church. So the outward organization may be very faulty, a misinterpretation of the divine plan or a human invention; it is still a visible Church. Its imperfect organization exposes it to dangers and damage. Faith in Christ and submission to him are the only essential characteristics of a Christian and of a true Church.* Therefore, "*in full consistency with this belief, we embrace, in the spirit of charity, those Christians who differ from us in opinion and practice on these subjects.*"

How should other denominations be regarded?

All churches "making profession of the holy religion of Christ and of submission to his laws" should be "embraced in the spirit of charity." Their creeds, laws, worship, sacraments and discipline should be respected, as far as they may be consistent with the word of God.† With them we should maintain individual and ecclesiastical correspondence and co-operation.‡ App., p. 521.

Those bodies which deny the holy religion of Christ, as the "Unitarian," cannot be recognized as churches.§ Other heretical denominations, denying essential doctrines, for the same reason cannot be regarded as parts of the

* *Form of Government*, ch. ii., sect. ii.; *Church Polity*, p. 44.

† *Assembly's Digest*, p. 124; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 299.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xii., sect. v.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 659.

Church. As to the so-called Church of Rome, see p. 84. A schismatical body of Ministers and communicants cannot be regarded as deriving authority from the Church from which they withdrew, but are to be regarded in the same light as other denominations not connected with our body.*

II. Should church courts possess civil power?

"*These assemblies ought not to possess any civil jurisdiction, nor to inflict any civil penalties. Their power is wholly moral or spiritual, and that only ministerial and declarative.*" The State cannot make laws for the Church, nor determine their application. Neither can the Church call upon the State to execute her laws or to inflict civil penalties (Luke 12 : 13, 14; John 18 : 36; Acts 15 : 1–32).†

The Southern Church says: "The sole functions of the Church as a kingdom and government, distinct from the civil commonwealth, are to proclaim, to administer and to enforce the law of Christ revealed in the Scriptures."‡

What is meant by the "power is wholly moral and spiritual"?

"The Church has no temporal authority, and its courts are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary, or by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate."§ The Church is a spiritual kingdom, and

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 646.

† *Authorized Standards of the Free Church of Scotland*, pp. 339–375; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 121, 122, 276; *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxiii., sect. iii.; *Minutes G. A. 1874*, pp. 27–30. See pp. 18 and 23.

‡ *Book of Church Order*, ch. ii., sect. iii., sub-sect. iii.

§ *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxxi., sect. iv.

not of this world (John 18 : 36), and therefore its authority is moral and spiritual, and has to do with our relation to God and his laws.

What is meant by the power being "ministerial and declarative"?

The Church has no inherent or sovereign power. Christ is the sole and absolute Head of the Church —the Lawgiver, whose laws must be administered by the courts of the Church as his ministers, in his name and according to his will. They can only declare his law and its application (Acts 15 : 1–32).*

What offences can they examine?

"Anything in the principles or practice of a church member which is contrary to the word of God, or which, if it be not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification."†

What power do church courts have?

"*They possess the right of requiring obedience to the laws of Christ, and of excluding the disobedient and disorderly from the privileges of the Church. To give efficiency, however, to this necessary and scriptural authority, they possess the powers requisite for obtaining evidence and inflicting censure. They can call before them any offender against the order and government of the Church; they can require members of their own society to appear and give testimony in the cause.*" This power is alike over individuals and church courts. In 1877 the Assembly declared that "the proper remedy for the Presbytery to apply to that Session" (which had failed to discipline a member when directed to do so), "if they continue to dis-

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. i.; *Form of Government*, ch. i., sect. vii. See p. 27.

† *Book of Discipline*, ch. i., sect. iii.; *Shorter Catechism*, Qq. 46–81.

obey the instructions of the Presbytery, is to put the Session under discipline for contumacy." *

What penalties can church courts inflict?

"*But the highest punishment to which their authority extends is to exclude the contumacious and impenitent from the congregation of believers.*" They may administer admonition, rebuke, deposition from office, suspension from church privileges and excommunication. † The penalty must be determined by the offence and the circumstances under which it was committed. Excommunication is the most severe penalty, and is inflicted only when all other methods have failed to reclaim the offender. By it he is cut off from the visible Church "as a heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18 : 15–20; 1 Cor. 5 : 4, 5). ‡

How are penalties to be inflicted?

"The sentence shall be published only in the church or churches which have been offended. Or, if the offence be of small importance, and such as it shall appear most for edification not to publish, the sentence may pass only in the judicatory." § The sentence "can derive no force whatever but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the Church universal," "since ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects." ‖ In the case of a Minister the sentence of suspension, deposition or excommunication is generally published in the congrega-

* *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 531.

† *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv., sects. xvii. and xx.; ch. v., sects. xi., xii., xiv.; *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. vi.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 496.

§ *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv., sect. xix. For the form see *Directory for Worship*, ch. x.

‖ *Form of Government*, ch. i., sect. viii. See p. 27.

tion and Presbytery, and in some way (as by the public papers) to the whole Church and the public. If he confesses his crime, "however penitent he may appear to the satisfaction of all, the Presbytery must without delay suspend him from the exercise of his office or depose him from the ministry; and, if the way be clear for the purpose, appoint him a due time to confess publicly before the congregation offended and to profess his penitence."*

How can these penalties be removed?

(1) By the court which inflicted the penalty, on receiving satisfactory evidence of the repentance of the offender.† In the case of a Minister he "shall not be restored, even on the deepest sorrow for his sin, until after some time of eminent and exemplary, humble and edifying conversation, to heal the wound made by his scandal. And he ought in no case to be restored, until it shall appear, that the sentiments of the religious public are strongly in his favor and demand his restoration."‡

(2) By a superior court reversing the decision when the case has been orderly brought before it on review or by appeal or complaint. §

What other powers have church courts?

They have power to administer oaths to witnesses, to interpret laws, to review the records and decisions of the lower courts; to receive members; "to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation; to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the Church;" to examine and license and ordain Can-

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. v., sect. x.

† *Ibid.*, ch. iv., sect. xvii. For the form see *Directory for Worship*, ch. x., sect. viii.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, ch. v., sect. xvi. § *Ibid.*, ch. vii.

didates for the ministry; to install and dismiss Pastors; to resolve questions of doctrine or discipline; to condemn erroneous opinions; to visit churches, redress evils, unite or divide congregations or form new ones; "to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care; to erect, unite or divide Presbyteries;" to see that Presbyteries observe the constitution of the Church; "to propose such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole Church;" to decide all controversies respecting doctrine or discipline; to bear testimony against error and immorality; to erect new Synods; to superintend the concerns of the whole Church, correspond with foreign churches; to suppress schismatical disputations; to recommend "reformation of manners and the promotion of charity, truth and holiness through all the churches under our care." *

For what object is church authority to be used?

To secure proper instruction to the people, to uphold sound doctrine, maintain peace, to remove offences, to vindicate the honor of Christ, the promotion of the purity and general edification of the Church and to reclaim offenders (1 Cor. 5 : 4; 14 : 26; Tit. 1 : 9; 1 Thess. 5 : 12, 13; Heb. 13 : 17).†

In what spirit is this authority to be exercised?

In the spirit of Jesus Christ, with humility, meekness, long-suffering, gentleness, firmness, and without fear or partiality (Gal. 6 : 1; 2 Cor. 10 : 1, 8–10; 1 Tim. 5 : 1; Tit. 1 : 13; James 2 : 4, 9; 3 : 19; 2 Tim. 4 : 2). "The exercise of discipline in such a manner as to edify the Church requires not only much of the spirit of piety, but also much prudence and discretion." "Tak-

* *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. vi.; ch. x., sect. viii.; ch. xi., sect. iv.; ch. xii., sect. v. † *Book of Discipline*, ch. i., sect. ii.

ing up charges on this ground" (on rumor or common fame) "requires great caution and the exercise of much Christian prudence."*

How many church courts are there?

"*The Church* (should) *be governed by congregational, presbyterial and synodical assemblies.*"

The congregational assembly is called the church Session, and "consists of the Pastor or Pastors and Ruling Elders of a particular congregation."†

"The Presbytery consists of all the Ministers, in number not less than five, and one Ruling Elder from each congregation, within a certain district."‡ Until 1716 this was the highest church judicatory in this country, and that Presbytery is now often referred to as the General Presbytery. §

"The Synod is a convention of the Bishops and Elders within a larger district, including at least three Presbyteries."‖ From 1716 to 1788 the Synod was the highest judicatory.§

"The General Assembly is the highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church. It shall represent in one body all the particular churches of this denomination." "It shall consist of an equal delegation of Bishops and Elders from each Presbytery."¶

What courts have the right to testify against erroneous and injurious publications?

In the opinion of the General Assembly any of our church courts have the right and responsibility to bear witness against any printed publication which is circulated within

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. i., sect. v.; ch. iii., sect. v.
† *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. i. ‡ *Ibid.*, ch. x., sect. ii.
§ See p. 16. ‖ *Form of Government*, ch. xi., sect. i.
¶ *Ibid.*, ch. xii., sects. i. and ii. See p. 17.

their bounds, which in its judgment inculcates injurious opinions, whether the author be dead or living, or whether in our denomination or not. Any church court may warn its Church against any erroneous book, even when it is not thought necessary to arraign the author as a heretic. This right is regarded as one of the most precious and powerful means of bearing testimony and of guarding the Church from error.*

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE CHURCH SESSION.

I. Of whom does the church Session consist?

"*The church Session consists of the Pastor or Pastors, and Ruling Elders of a particular congregation.*"

Can a special Session be appointed?

Ruling Elders have jurisdiction only over those whom they represent.† The Presbytery cannot therefore authorize them to serve in other churches. The appointment by Presbytery of a "special Session" that is "composed of Elders belonging to different congregations," even to try a case of discipline, "is entirely unconstitutional." So the Assembly decided in 1823 and 1824. The O. S. Assembly in 1860 refused "to make provision for the calling of special Sessions of Ruling Elders from neighboring churches to obviate delays in cases of discipline for want of quorums of church Sessions."‡ In the decision of 1824 it is stated that "no Presby-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 122. † *Ibid.*, p. 124. See p. 57.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 123, 124.

tery has authority, according to the constitution of our Church, to delegate to a committee power to perform such acts as those"—to sit in judgment upon a member of the church and an Elder, and condemn and suspend him.*

What can be done if the Session cannot act?

If the church be without a Pastor, the Presbytery should appoint a Moderator, or the Session may invite some Minister of the same Presbytery to moderate the Session on a particular occasion; or, if that be impracticable, one of the Elders may preside.†

If the Session be small, and the only Elder or Elders be accused, the Presbytery is the competent court to try the offender, and it is its duty to do so.‡

If the Session be small, or its members be more or less interested in the case of discipline, or "if the case be new, important or difficult, of peculiar delicacy, the decision of which may establish principles or precedents of extensive influence on which the sentiments of the inferior judicatory are greatly divided, or on which for any reason it is highly desirable that a larger body should first decide," the Session may refer the case to the Presbytery for advice or for ultimate trial and decision.§

II. What constitutes a quorum of Session?

"*Of this judicatory, two Elders, if there be as many in the congregation, with the Pastor, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum.*" The O. S. Assembly in 1852 refused to propose a change in the constitution authorizing a Pastor and one Elder to perform sessional acts, when the other Elder shall, in the judgment of Presbytery, be

* See pp. 190, 218. † See pp. 125–129.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 118. See p. 58.

§ *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. ii., sub-sect. ii.

from any cause incompetent to act in the case. If there be but one Elder, he with the Pastor or the Moderator appointed by Presbytery, form the Session capable of transacting business even of a judicial character. The O. S. Assembly in 1869 decided that if one of the two Elders refuse to act, and has left the church, the other is entitled to be regarded as the only Elder, and to serve as such.*

Is a quorum complete without a Minister?

It would seem from this section that a Minister was necessary. But by sect. iv., in certain cases in which "it is impracticable without great inconvenience to procure the attendance of such a Moderator" (a Minister), "the Session may proceed without it," one of the Elders presiding. The N. S. Assembly in 1869 decided that "the Session, under its responsibility to Presbytery, is the judge of the impracticability of procuring a Moderator."† If the church has a Pastor, it is evident from this section that he must be present. The Elders cannot hold a meeting of Session without him, except "in the case of the sickness or absence of the Pastor," when another Minister of the same Presbytery must preside.‡

May less than a quorum transact business?

"The law of a quorum is not a mere rule of procedure, a provision of order, but a matter respecting the very being of the judicatory. Any number of members less than a constituted quorum do not make a judicatory, and are not competent to any organic act." So said the N. S. Assembly in 1861.* The O. S. Assembly and that of the reunited Church have always acted in accord-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 125. † *Ibid.*, p. 127.

‡ See p. 126.

ance with the above, refusing to recognize any act determined by less than a quorum of the court, until it be reaffirmed or authorized by some competent body. In cases of real necessity less than a quorum may meet, consult and determine even important business informally. The action may be reported at the next meeting of the Session, and becomes valid only when adopted by the Session as its own action. Such informal meetings of the members of Session are not infrequent, and are sometimes very important, but they are not meetings of Session, and are incapable of any organic act.

III. Who is the Moderator of Session?

"*The Pastor of the congregation shall always be the Moderator of the Session.*" He is Moderator by virtue of his office and the act of Presbytery which installed him. He is not accountable to the church nor to the Session for his conduct or decisions as Moderator. No appeal can be taken, even on points of order, to the Session or to the congregation. He is responsible only to the Presbytery, by which alone he can be overruled, tried and judged.* "An appeal to the church Session from the Moderator, if he be a Minister, would not be in order. In this case exceptions to his decision must be filed to go before the Presbytery."†

Is there any exception?

"*Except when, for prudential reasons, it may appear advisable that some other Minister should be invited to preside; in which case the Pastor may, with the concurrence of the Session, invite some other Minister as they may see meet, belonging to the same Presbytery, to preside in that case. The same expedient may be adopted in case of the*

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. v., sect. ii.

† *Manual of Presbyterian Law and Usage*, p. 167.

sickness or absence of the Pastor." The meaning of this is evidently that Ministers of other Presbyteries cannot be invited to moderate the Session. We have no binding decision to the contrary. But in 1843 the O. S. Assembly determined that it is "orderly that a member of one Presbytery moderate a church Session of another Presbytery." In the next year, however, the following resolution was passed: "That the last General Assembly, in deciding that a Session may invite a Minister who is a member of another Presbytery to sit as their Moderator, did not include any of those cases in which it is required either in express terms or by plain implication ('Form of Government,' ch. iv., sects. iii. and iv.) that the Moderator shall be of the same Presbytery as the congregation; but (we) are of opinion that in cases of a difficult kind, for which no provision is made, a member of another Presbytery may be invited to act as Moderator if it be found expedient."* In a special case—viz. "in the absence of the Pastor and great inconvenience in procuring a Moderator, having no ordained Minister of the same Presbytery residing within forty miles" —the N. S. Assembly decided in 1869 that "there is no provision for inviting any Minister not belonging to the same Presbytery to preside over a meeting of Session, much less any Minister of the word."*

Can a Stated Supply act as Moderator?

A Stated Supply, Missionary, Candidate, or Pastor elect, whether a Licentiate or an ordained Minister, has no authority in the particular church, and therefore cannot act as Moderator, unless he has been appointed by Presbytery to preside over the Session, or

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 126.

unless he has been "invited by the Session to preside on a particular occasion."* "A Stated Supply has not the right, power and prerogative in the church Session as a Pastor."†

May a Pastor emeritus preside over Session?

The title "Pastor emeritus" is an honorable title, and, though the pastoral relation is not formally dissolved, he ceases to be the acting Pastor, and has no more official power in that church, than an Elder has who for similar reasons ceases to be an acting Elder.‡ He therefore cannot claim a seat in Session. As any other member of the Presbytery, he may be invited to preside on a particular occasion.

May an assistant Pastor?

Unless installed as a co-Pastor, he has no seat in Session, except when invited to preside on a particular occasion. If a co-Pastor, he presides in turn by virtue of his office.§

IV. When a church is without a Pastor, who is the Moderator?

"*The Moderator of the Session shall be, either the Minister appointed for that purpose by the Presbytery, or one invited by the Session to preside on a particular occasion,*" or one of the Elders, "*where it is impracticable without great inconvenience to procure the attendance of such a Moderator*" (a Minister).

When is it especially necessary to have a Minister?

When the Session is "*constituted for judicial business.*"

What is judicial business?

Any act of discipline, but especially the formal trial

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 402.

† *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 549; *1880*, p. 45.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. vi.

§ See p. 129.

of an accused person.* "Whenever a judicatory is about to sit in a judicial capacity, it shall be the duty of the Moderator solemnly to announce from the chair that the body is about to pass to the consideration of the business assigned for trial, and to enjoin on the members to recollect and regard their high character as judges of a court of Jesus Christ, and the solemn duty in which they are about to act." †

Why is it then especially necessary that a Minister should preside?

Because judicial business is the most responsible that can come before the Session, and is the highest exercise of its authority.‡ It is to be presumed that the Minister will have a fuller knowledge of the rules of church order and discipline, and be better able to exercise the spirit of piety, prudence and discretion required by the "Book of Discipline," ch. i., sect. v.

V. When there are co-Pastors who is the Moderator?

"*In congregations where there are two or more Pastors, they shall, when present, alternately preside in the Session.*" However they may differ in age and the length of their pastorates, they are officially equal and have like voice and authority in Session. This of course does not forbid the young man, even when presiding, to pay special respect and deference to the opinions and wishes of his aged and more experienced colleague.

VI. With what duty is the Session charged?

"*The church Session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation.*"

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv.

† *General Rules for Judicatories*, xl. See p. 496.

‡ See the above admonition ordered to be given.

Over whom does it exercise its authority?

All the members of the church—full communicants, those who have been suspended from church privileges,* and all baptized persons.†

Where does original jurisdiction over church members belong?

To the Session. Not to the congregation, "no vote of the congregation of a Presbyterian church can affect the rights of a communing member as such," all such power is vested in the Session.‡ Nor to the higher courts. In certain cases an Elder may be tried directly by the Presbytery.§ The Presbytery may require the Session to proceed to discipline a member.‖

Are Candidates and Licentiates members of the church?

They are members of the particular church, and are, as such, responsible to the Session. They are under the care of Presbytery as to their studies and qualifications for the ministry. The Presbytery may regulate these, or arrest their preparation, or recall their license. If discipline is necessary, the Session must cite and try them, informing the Moderator of Presbytery when charges are tabled against them, that proper action may be taken at once in regard to their license to preach.¶

Is the Pastor to be enrolled as a member of the church?

Neither the Pastor nor any Minister is to be considered as a member of the church. He is not under the

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. x., sect. iv.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 128.
† *Book of Discipline*, ch. i., sect. vi. See p. 112.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 127.
§ See p. 58. ‖ See pp. 223, 224.
¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 402. See pp. 195, 325.

care of the particular church, but is a member of the Presbytery, under its care and responsible to it.*

What is the first power of Session mentioned?

"*To inquire into the knowledge and Christian conduct of the members of the church.*" This includes the oversight (1) of the doctrinal views and growth in the knowledge of the truth, (2) and of the outward life (Heb. 13 : 17 ; 1 Thess. 5 : 12, 13 ; 1 Tim. 5 : 17).

Are the Sabbath-schools and home instruction under the care of the Session?

The Sabbath-school is the chief means for the public instruction of the young, and is therefore under the direct control of the Session. The teachers, books, rules and officers must be subject to its approval. "The Session cannot delegate its responsibility for the religious instruction of the children of the Church."† The home instruction is a very important means of grace, and the Session are required to see that the children receive proper training and instruction in the family and at school.† For example, the O. S. Assembly in 1849 declares the placing of children in Roman Catholic schools is a violation on the part of parents of covenant engagement.‡

What is the second power of Session?

That of trial. "*To call before them offenders and witnesses, being members of their own congregation, and to introduce other witnesses where it may be necessary to bring the process to issue, and when they can be procured to attend.*"

* *Form of Government*, ch. x., sect. ii. ; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 133 ; *Book of Discipline*, ch. v., sect. ii.

† *Manual of Presbyterian Law and Usage*, p. 46 ; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 641, 642, 643–645, 671. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 673.

Offenders cannot be tried by the Session of another church. What constitutes an offence; under what circumstances it may be brought before the Session; how the charges are to be drawn up; how they are to be presented; and how the trial is to be conducted, are questions which are answered in the "Book of Discipline," chs. i., ii., iii., iv. If the accused refuses to appear, he must be cited a second time, and warned that if he do not appear at the time appointed, he will be censured for contumacy, and that, after assigning some one to manage his defence, the Session will proceed to take testimony in his case.*

Who may be summoned as offenders?

"*Members of the congregation*" against whom charges are tabled. (In regard to baptized members, see pp. 111, 112.) It should be noticed that the declaration that "all baptized persons are members of the Church, are under its care, and subject to its government and discipline," is found in the "Book of Discipline" (ch. i., sect. vi.), which treats only of judicial process—of offences, charges, trial and sentence. A dismissed member, committing an offence while *in transitu*, is still under the jurisdiction of the Session which dismissed him. If such an offence becomes known after he has united with another church, that church must conduct the trial.†

Who may be appointed counsel for the accused?

"No professional counsel shall be permitted to appear and plead in cases of process in any of our ecclesiastical courts." The accused "may request any Minister or Elder belonging to the judicatory before which he ap-

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv., sects. x. and xiii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 504–510.

† *Book of Discipline*, ch. x.

pears to prepare and exhibit his cause, as he may judge proper." *

What witnesses may be summoned?

The Session may call before them "*witnesses, being members of their own congregation, and introduce other witnesses where it may be necessary to bring the process to issue, and when they can be procured to attend.*" If they refuse to appear, they must be cited a second time, and dealt with as the accused when he refuses.† The Session has no authority over the communicants of another church, but "they can be procured to attend" by request made personally or through the Session to which they are subject. Those witnesses who are not members of the Presbyterian Church may be procured by request. The testimony may sometimes be taken by a commission in the place where the witnesses reside. The commission must consist of two or three members of the Session, and be appointed for that purpose, with due notice given to all parties. The testimony thus received shall be considered as if taken before the judicatory.‡ Any member of the Session may be called upon to give testimony: this does not interfere with his remaining a judge in the case.§ The O. S. Assembly in 1854 decided that a member of the court could not excuse himself on the ground that he had received no citation.‖ The Assembly of 1878 declared that the prosecution has "the right to introduce members of the court on the spot, without a citation, to disprove and rebut certain testimony of the defence."¶ The O. S. Assembly in 1854

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv., sect. xxi. See p. 217.

† *Book of Discipline*, ch. vi., sect. xvi. ‡ *Ibid.*, sect. xiii.

§ *Ibid.*, sect. xv. ‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 532.

¶ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 118.

was asked in regard to a Minister declining to appear when cited to appear before the Session as a witness, and replied by referring to "Book of Discipline," ch. i., sect. v. (enjoining prudence and discretion), ch. iv., sect. x. (of a second citation), ch. v., sects. i., ii. (concerning process against a minister before Presbytery), ch. vi., sect. xvi. (of the sentence by Presbytery).*

May non-church members appear as witnesses?

"Persons who are not church members, even though heathen, of good repute, may be admitted to testify. Their credibility is to be determined by the judicatory." †

If charges be presented, must the accused be tried?

The Session must judge if the charges presented are (1) serious enough to be considered, (2) from accusers of proper character and actuated by right motives, (3) of the nature of accusations, (4) in due and definite form, and (5) within the time prescribed.‡ When the charges have been received as in order and proper for the cognizance of the Session, they cannot be ignored: the Session must proceed "to try or formally dismiss the charges." § So when one deems himself injured by a slanderous publication, and tables charges against the author, an explanation by the accused, and an exhortation to him to be more careful in his publication, will not justify the Session to dismiss the charges. The Session ought either to entertain the charge or to "adopt a minute declaring him free from the imputations of the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 532.

† *Book of Discipline*, ch. vi., sects. i., ii., and iv.; *Minutes G. A 1881*, p. 585.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, ch. i., sect. iv.; ch. ii., sect. iii.; ch. iii., sect v.; ch. iv., sect. iv.; ch. xi.

§ *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 46.

published articles."* In 1881 the Assembly, in considering a complaint against a court for refusing a trial, declared "that upon the facts stated by the Presbytery as the basis of its action, the question whether the investigation asked for should be entered upon or not was one to be determined in the exercise of a sound discretion on the part of the Presbytery."†

May a court discontinue an investigation which it has commenced?

Such a case was presented to the Assembly in 1881, which replied: "The investigation, being entered upon by the Presbytery on its own motion, was under its control, and could be lawfully discontinued, with the consent of the accused, if in the judgment of the Presbytery its further prosecution would be useless or injurious to the Church."‡

May a communicant demand a trial?

It sometimes happens that a rumor seriously affecting the Christian character of a communicant becomes widely spread, and no one appears as accuser, and the Session neglects to summon him, or slanderous statements may be made in open court. In such cases the member may demand a trial for his exculpation, or he may table charges for slander against those who have originated or circulated the reports.§

What is the third power of the Session?

"*To receive members into the church.*" This includes (1) the receiving persons from the world on profession of their faith and by baptism.‖ In 1872 the Assembly

* *Minutes G. A. 1878,* p. 117.

† *Book of Discipline,* ch. iii., sect. vi.; *Minutes G. A. 1881,* p. 586.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1881,* p. 588.

§ See p. 134.

‖ *Directory for Worship,* ch. ix., sect. iv.

said "that the admission of persons to the sealing ordinances is confided by the 'Form of Government' really and exclusively to the church Session."* App., p. 521.

Persons holding the universal and actual salvation of the whole human race or of fallen angels are not to be received.†

Persons refusing to present their children for baptism are not to be refused on account of scruples concerning infant baptism, yet in every such case the Session must judge of the expediency of admitting them.†

Duelists and those who have been accessories are not to be received until they manifest a just sense of guilt and give satisfactory evidence of repentance. (Ministers are recommended not to attend the funeral of one who has fallen in a duel.)‡

Sabbath-breakers, including all those who carry on secular occupations on the Lord's Day, further than necessity and mercy may demand, with a view to secure worldly advantages, are to be refused.‡

No general rule is to be made concerning those engaged in the sale of intoxicating liquors, but the Session must judge in each case as to his reception or rejection.§ In 1865 the O. S. Assembly said: "It is not adopting any new term of communion to exclude persons from sealing ordinances on the ground of their manufacturing and vending intoxicating drinks as a beverage. On the contrary, it is only falling back upon the teachings of the Bible and the constitution of the Church, which requires visible Christianity, in a credible form, of those who would partake of these ordinances, and refuses the privileges to those who by overt acts of offence fail to

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 678. † *Ibid.*, p. 674.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 675. § *Ibid.*, pp. 676, 483-493. See p. 470.

present such evidence." * In 1877 the Assembly called upon "the Sessions of our churches to guard carefully the purity of our Church, by refusing to admit to membership, or to retain those within her pale, who are engaged in the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, or who derive their livelihood from this sinful traffic." †

(2) The receiving of communicants from other churches. This can be done only on certificates, orderly drawn up, and within one year of the date of their issue. ‡ If a church of another denomination refuses to give a letter of dismissal, a certificate of good standing should be sought. If this be denied, and there be no charges against the applicant, and the Session has satisfactory information concerning his Christian life, he may be received on profession of his faith.

(3) The receiving of baptized members to full communion and to all the privileges of the church on an examination of their knowledge and faith. § The O. S. Assembly in 1853 declared that "every Session must judge for themselves of that degree of knowledge of Christian doctrine and adherence thereto on the part of those examined by them, which may render their reception suitable and for their own edification and the peace of the Church." In 1864 the N. S. Assembly decided: "It is the province of the Session to judge of the qualifications of candidates for membership in the church. For their guidance in the matters noticed in the overture (as to dancing, card-playing and the use, manufacture and sale

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 490. † *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 558.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 130, 352, 622, 625. See p. 147.
§ *Directory for Worship*, ch. ix.

of intoxicating liquors) reference is made to past acts of the Assembly, found in 'Digest,' ch. vii., on Moral Questions."*

And (4) the restoration of those who have been under church discipline, on satisfactory evidence of their repentance and reformation.†

When does church membership begin?

(1) At birth. When the parents are professing Christians, then the children are "born in the pale of the visible Church," "which consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children."‡

(2) When the applicant is received by the Session on certificate. The Session represents the church, and is the only body which has power to receive members. Nothing more is necessary to give validity to the act of the Session. The reception is generally published from the pulpit at the next administration of the Lord's Supper, and sometimes even by the personal appearance of the new communicant before the congregation, and sometimes a form is observed of public welcome by the Pastor and church members. A formula was proposed in 1873 to the Assembly by a committee appointed for that purpose: this was ordered to be printed in the Minutes and was referred to the next Assembly, which, after some discussion, indefinitely postponed the matter. In 1875 the Assembly refused to reconsider the subject.§ In 1865 the N. S. Assembly, speaking of the confessions of faith and covenants used in local churches for the recognition of mem-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 676.

† *Directory for Worship*, ch. x., sect. viii.

‡ *Ibid.*, ch. ix., sect. i.; *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxv., sect. ii.

§ *Minutes G. A. 1873*, pp. 549, 640; *1874*, pp. 16, 52; *1875*, p. 506.

bers, says that these may or may not be used as the Session may think expedient, but are not essential to the establishment of membership; but, "whether used or not, the vote of Session is, by the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, the act on which membership depends." And in 1872 the Assembly asserted "that the admission of persons to sealing ordinances is confided by the 'Form of Government' really and exclusively to the church Session." "That any forms for publicly recognizing those who have been thus admitted to sealing ordinances should keep in view the principle thus declared."*

(3) On the profession of faith before the Session. If the applicant has not been baptized, he is received into membership by the Session on profession of his faith, and therefore has a right to baptism. He is to be baptized, not to become a member, but because he is a member of the Church. The N. S. Assembly in 1865 stated that the administration of baptism "must of course be involved in and attendant upon this sessional act, either at the time, which would be entirely proper, or at a subsequent period appointed for that purpose." In 1867 it asserted, "The vote of Session does not entitle an unbaptized person to privileges of the Church, for the reason that baptism, as our 'Confession of Faith' declares (ch. xxviii., sect. i.), is declared to be a sacrament for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church."† The report of the committee appointed by the Assembly of 1872, which was referred to the next Assembly, and finally indefinitely postponed, says: "The act of Session must be regarded as *inchoate* till baptism, as enjoined by our constitution and the New Testament, is administer-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 129, 678. † *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 130.

ed."* Dr. Hodge says: "Baptism does not make a man a member of the Church; it is the public and orderly recognition of his membership."† This baptism may be administered before the Session or in the presence of the congregation.‡

May a Session refuse to receive a communicant presenting a certificate from another church?

If the certificate be regular and in order, the Session may refuse to receive the applicant if not satisfied with his knowledge and piety, or if they deem it inexpedient for the church to receive him. The Session must judge of the qualifications of its members. This principle was declared by the N. S. Assembly in 1864.§ It has been frequently recognized by the O. S. Assembly and by the reunited Church. Our "Form of Government" gives this right to all the courts. The Assembly has always defended the privilege of the Presbytery to judge by examination the fitness of its members.‖ The decision, as every other act, is subject to review by the higher courts.

If the certificate be a qualified one, the Session must judge of the circumstances, their personal knowledge of the Christian life of the candidate, and the propriety of admitting him.¶

May members be received without a formal meeting of the Session?

The reception of members is one of the most important acts and prerogatives of the Session. The Pastor and Elders meeting informally or without a quorum do

* *Minutes G. A. 1873*, p. 638. † *Church Polity*, p. 246.
‡ *Directory for Worship*, ch. ix., sect. iv.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 676. ‖ *Ibid.*, p. 150.
¶ *Book of Discipline*, ch. xi., sects. i. and iv.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 625; note by Rev. W. E. Moore, D. D.

not constitute a Session, and cannot act as such.* Yet in cases of necessity, as the severe sickness or the infirmity of the applicant, or the impracticability of obtaining a quorum of Session, a part of the Session may hold an informal meeting and examine the candidate, and report to the Session duly organized, which may act upon the reception.†

What notice should be given of the reception of members?

On the reception of a member the Session should immediately notify the church from which he has been dismissed.‡

Whom may the Session dismiss?

"When any member shall remove from one congregation to another, he shall produce satisfactory testimonials of his church membership and dismission."§ These are to be obtained by a formal application to the Session.

Those whom the Session find to be in good and regular standing shall be dismissed with regular letters to unite with some other particular church.‡ Their names are to be retained on the roll of communicants until the Session is duly notified of their reception by the church to which they were dismissed.‖ Sessions are urged to use the form of certificates prepared by the Board of Publication.¶ In 1869 the O. S. Assembly ordered that certificates should be furnished to removing members, "whether in full communion or members by bap-

* See p. 124, and *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 130. † See p. 125.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 624.
§ *Book of Discipline*. ch. xi., sect. i.
‖ *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 82.
¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 625. See p. 145.

tism only, with testimonials of their standing," and that the Session shall send a copy of the testimonials to the church "within the reach of the parties so removed," if there be but a single church of our order near them.* The Southern Church requires that certificates of dismission "shall always include the names of their baptized children."† Appendix, p. 521.

Those who have been absent for some time from the oversight of the Session may be dismissed with qualified letters; that is, with testimonials as "to their character only up to the time of their removal, unless the judicatory have good information of a more recent date." If absent more than two years, "their absence and the ignorance of the church respecting their demeanor for that time should be distinctly stated in the certificates."‡ In accordance with this, the O. S. Assembly decided that neither the Presbytery nor Synod can, in such a case, order regular certificates to be given, the qualified letters being "agreeable to the constitution and to the truth."§

May a suspended member be dismissed?

A suspended member remains under the jurisdiction of the Session which suspended him: it alone can remove the sentence. Yet the O. S. Assembly decided in 1849 that in circumstances of necessity, arising from removal to an inconvenient distance, a suspended member may be dismissed to another church with a certificate stating the case; "provided, that in no instance the Session to which he be dismissed be allowed to review or rejudge the case."‖ The above decision would give the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 624.

† *Book of Church Order*, ch. v., sect. iii., sub-sect. v.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, ch. xi., sects. iii. and iv.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 570. ‖ *Ibid.*, p. 623.

Session receiving him the jurisdiction which the other Session possessed—viz. of restoring the offender on satisfactory repentance and reformation.

If a suspended member be restored, how may he be dismissed?

If the Session restore him, he is of course restored to good and regular standing, and then, if dismissed, he must receive the usual certificate.

If he be restored by a superior court on review, appeal or complaint, he is restored to full membership, and the Session is bound to give him regular letters.*

May a certificate of dismission be indefinite?

The O. S. Assembly in 1853 decided that in some cases the Session may dismiss a member without specifying the church with which he is to unite. But the reunited Church in 1871 urged upon Sessions the importance of giving to members who remove from them either letters of dismission and recommendation to a particular church, or, in case of uncertain destination, letters of credence. The O. S. Assembly in 1869 recommended that the Session should furnish any member removing from their bounds, whether in full communion or member by baptism only, with testimonials of his standing, which should be presented as soon as possible to some church of our connection, and that such person be advised to transfer his relation at the earliest opportunity.†

May members be dismissed to join another denomination?

This is often done. The O. S. Assembly in 1839 decided that in such cases "the proper course is to give a certificate of Christian character only." In 1848 this

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 623.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 623, 624.

rule was declared to be "neither a censure on the individuals nor the churches to which they seek to be dismissed, but sets forth the only fact which it is important for those churches to know." But in 1851 the O. S. Assembly stated "that the whole subject is one that ought to be left to the sound discretion of the various church Sessions, according to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church."*

Is the Session the only body that may grant a certificate of dismission?

It is a sessional act, yet the Synod has the power to order the Presbytery to issue to a communicant a certificate of dismission from a church; and such certificate was declared by the Assembly to be a valid document.† The case which was the occasion of this decision was peculiar. The Session having repeatedly refused to obey the order of Presbytery to grant a dismissal to one of its members, the Synod ordered the Presbytery to furnish a certificate. The communicant appealed to the Assembly, on the ground that such a certificate was not valid, and would arouse suspicion unless endorsed by the highest authority.

How are members of a dissolved church to obtain letters?

A church can be dissolved by Presbytery, even "overruling the wishes of a majority of the members of the said church organization.‡ When this is done, it is the duty of the Presbytery to transfer the members to some other church. The N. S. Assembly in 1869 declared that the members of a dissolved church are amenable to Pres-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 623.

† *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 511.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 172; *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 507.

bytery for their certificates, their use of them and for their conduct.*

When does dismission take effect?

In 1867 the N. S. Assembly, in answer to this question, said: "A letter of dismission, whether issued to a Ruling Elder or private member, terminates the relations of the person dismissed with the church giving the letter, except so far as said church is responsible for its watch and care over him during the period of transition." "These rights and privileges can be regained in that church by returning the letters of dismission to the authority which gave them."†

May a dismission which is irregular be valid?

The O. S. Assembly in 1849 recognized the validity of certificates, while disapproving of the manner in which they were issued.‡ If the Session be not satisfied with the certificates presented, they may return them to have the informalities corrected before receiving the members. Or if, however, the informalities be not considered of importance, the intention of the Session dismissing being evident, or "the church to which they remove have other satisfactory means of information" of their membership and dismission,§ they may be received, subject of course to the review of Presbytery.

What is the form of a regular certificate?

"———, ———, 188–.

"THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That ——— ——— is a member in good standing of the ——— Presbyterian church of ———, and that — is hereby dismissed at — own request, and affectionately recommended to the fellowship of the ——— Presbyterian church of ———, or of any

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 617. † *Ibid.*, p. 352.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 624. § *Book of Discipline*, ch. xi., sect. i.

other church in our communion with which God in his providence may order — lot; and when so received — responsibility to this church will cease.

"By order of the Session,

"———— ————, *Moderator.*"

A note is generally added, stating that the above certificate is valid for one year after its date.*

If the person dismissed be an Elder or Deacon, the certificate should state that "he has for the space of —— years sustained the office of Ruling Elder [or Deacon] to the edification of the church, and enjoyed the fraternal confidence and affection of his brethren in the eldership": [or of its officers].

What is the form of a certificate of reception?

"————, ————, 188–.

"THIS CERTIFIES, That ———— ———— was on the ———— day of ————, 188–, received by the Session into the communion of the ———— Presbyterian church of ————, on a certificate of dismission from the ———— Presbyterian church of ————.

"By order of the Session,

"———— ————, *Moderator.*"

What is the form of a qualified certificate of dismission?

"————, ————, 188–.

"THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That ———— ———— was a member in good standing of the ———— Presbyterian church of ———— until ———— —, 188–, since which date he has been absent from the oversight of the Session. — is hereby dismissed at — own request, and commended to the fellowship of the ———— Presbyterian

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. xi., sect. ii.

church of ———, or of any other church in our communion with which God in his providence may order — lot; and when so received — responsibility to this church will cease.

"By order of the Session,

"———— ————, *Moderator.*"

What is a letter of credence?

It is a letter given to a communicant who is about to travel or to remove, and is unable to state with what particular church he may determine to unite. It may be worded thus:

"————, ————, 188-.

"THIS IS TO CERTIFY, THAT ———— ———— is a member of the ——— Presbyterian church of ——— in good standing. As he contemplates spending some ——— in journeying, this letter of credence is given to —, that it may introduce — to the people of God, and facilitate — occasional communion with any church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ among whom — may for the time be sojourning.

"By order of the Session,

"———— ————, *Moderator.*"

May membership be terminated in any other way?

"No member of a church can properly ever cease to be such but by death, exclusion, a regular dismission or an orderly withdrawing to join some other Christian denomination."*

May a member connect himself with another church on profession of faith?

This is disorderly. His church relation cannot be thus

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 625; *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 505; *1878*, p. 58.

ignored or dissolved. He is still under the jurisdiction of the Session, and liable to discipline for attempting to unite with another church. If he has been suspended, he can be restored only on confession and reformation, and not by profession of faith in another church. The N. S. Assembly in 1866 declared that "so soon as the facts in the case are ascertained by the Session of the second church, the proper order of procedure is for this Session, after conference with the accused person, to strike his name from their roll of church-members as not under their jurisdiction, to communicate their action to the Session suspending him, with the reasons for it, and to request the said Session to proceed against him on separate process for duplicity and disorder." *

If the church with which he unites be one of another denomination, the Session may order his name to be struck from the roll of communicants, or may, by process of discipline, suspend him from church privileges.† The N. S. Assembly in 1839 recommended that no other action should be taken than to strike his name from the roll.‡ This action was reaffirmed by the Assembly of 1879.§ Appendix, p. 521.

How are absent members to be treated?

If a member willfully absents himself from the ordinances of the church, he is guilty of high offence, and the Session should make such case a matter of discipline. So the O. S. Assembly affirmed several times. Disagreement with the Pastor and diligence in supporting and attending another church are reasons by no means to be received as justifying his absence and his refusal to

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 616. † *Ibid.*, p. 625.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

§ *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 613. See *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 59, 262.

support the church to which he belongs. The N. S. Assembly recognizes the above principle in its decision in 1865, declaring that in such a case, even when the absentee sends a written confession that he has embraced heretical views, has therefore absented himself, and desires to be cut off from the church, a formal trial is necessary.*

If a member remove, to reside elsewhere for a number of years or indefinitely, the Session should counsel him to transfer his relation to the church within whose bounds he may be.† The Southern Presbyterian Church orders that "if he shall neglect for twelve months, without satisfactory reasons given to both these courts, to transfer his ecclesiastical relation, the court whose bounds he has left shall be required to transfer them. And should that court neglect this duty, the one into whose bounds he has removed shall assume jurisdiction, giving due notice to the other body."‡ Such power is not recognized by our constitution nor by the decisions of our Assembly.

If a member be absent for some time, and his residence be unknown to the Session, he is by no means to have his name erased from the roll. "If he should ever return or be heard from, he is to be regularly dealt with according to the word of God and the principles of our Church." If the Session has good reason to believe that he "has absented himself with design, either from a disregard of Christian privilege or from a wish to escape from the inspection or discipline of the church, they ought without unnecessary delay to declare him suspended from the privileges of the church, etc." The N. S. Assembly in 1853 declared that according to the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 493, 494. † *Ibid.*, pp. 624, 628.
‡ *Book of Church Order*, Part II., ch. xv., sect. ii.

"Book of Discipline," ch. xi., a church member may not absent himself for a longer time than one year from the ordinances "without a forfeiture of his good standing." When one has been absent for years and his residence unknown, the Session should make record of the fact, and declare that he has forfeited his good standing until he returns and accounts for his absence. The O. S. Assembly in 1865 passed a similar order. A member absent for two years and his residence unknown shall be marked absent on the roll, and his name shall not be counted in the statistical reports to Presbytery. If he return, the Session shall cite him to appear, and inquire concerning his conduct, and restore his name or discipline him as the case may require. The O. S. Assembly in 1856 required that the names of absentees, whose whereabouts are unknown, be placed on a reserved list, and not be reported among the communicants until they return and satisfy the Session. The Assembly of the reunited Church ratified the above in 1872 by declaring, "It may nevertheless be well for each church to record on a separate list the names of those who have been absent for more than two years from their church relations, and whose residence is unknown; and the names thus recorded may be omitted in the statistical returns of the church."*

May a member's name be erased at his request?

"The constitution of the Church provides for no demission of her members, or the striking off of names from her roll, save as the result of death or excommunication."† The Assembly in 1875 was asked if the Session may grant the request of a member to have his

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 624–628. See pp. 142, 284.

† *Ibid.*, p. 628.

connection with the church dissolved on the ground of want of piety or of change in doctrinal belief. The answer given was, that this "would decidedly be irregular and injurious." "There are many sincere persons who, notwithstanding the most persevering efforts to enlighten them, remain ignorant of the best evidences of personal piety, and from despondency or spiritual indolence may desire to have their names dropped from the roll of communicants. Long forbearance should be exercised toward such, and in course of time we may hope that they may become happy in the enjoyment of their privileges. There are, however, some who give painful evidence of the want of spiritual life, and, after diligent efforts to reclaim them, willfully refuse to repent of sin or to put faith in Christ. These should be dealt with in a wise, decided manner. They should be charged with the guilt of impenitence and a breach of their covenant obligations. Their own confessions render useless most of the usual forms of process in cases of outward and scandalous offences, but they should nevertheless be treated as offenders ('Book of Discipline,' ch. i., sect. iii.); and when this is ineffectual to bring them to repentance, they should be in a regular manner suspended from the communion of the Church."*

In 1878 the Assembly was asked, "What shall be done with persons who, after having been, upon examination, received by the Session, conclude that they are not Christians, never come to the Lord's Supper, and request that their names be erased?" The following reply was made: "There are but three ways in which the name of a person can be removed from the roll of a church. These are by death, by dismis-

* *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 505.

sion to another church and by the administration of discipline. Great forbearance, however, should be exercised toward those whose position has been indicated in the overture. Their unfavorable judgment in regard to themselves may be dependent upon a temporary depression of mind. They should therefore be the subject of earnest prayer and affectionate expostulation, with the hope that they may be brought to the enjoyment of Christian privileges. The application of these general principles, however, must be left to the discretion of the Session." * Appendix, p. 522.

The Southern Church, however, says: "When a communicating member shall confess before the church Session an unregenerate heart, and there is no evidence of other offence, the court may transfer his name to the roll of non-communicating members, and he shall be faithfully warned of his guilt in disobeying the gospel, and encouraged to seek the redemption freely offered in Christ; and a statement of the case shall be made to the church. But this action shall not be taken until the church Session has ascertained, after mature inquiry and due delay, that this confession does not result from Satanic temptation or transient darkness of spirit. This rule, however, shall not be applied to those who willfully absent themselves from the Lord's table, which is always an offence." †

How are members received and dismissed in other churches?

In Episcopal churches the whole power of receiving and dismissing members rests in the Pastor or Rector. When he who was baptized in infancy "can say the Creed,

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 58.

† *Book of Church Order*, Part II., ch. xii., sect. ii.

the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and is sufficiently instructed in other parts of the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose," he is to "be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him;" "which order (of confirmation) is very convenient to be observed, to the end that children, being now come to years of discretion, and having learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in baptism, may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the church, ratify and confirm the same, and also promise that by the grace of God they will evermore themselves faithfully observe such things as they by their own confession have assented unto." It is usual that those applying for confirmation should be under the frequent and special instruction of the Rector for some time before they are presented to the Bishop. Often evidences of regeneration are required. The responsibility in each case is with the Rector, who "shall either bring or send in writing, with his hand subscribed thereunto, the names of all such persons within his parish as he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed."* Communicants are transferred from one congregation to another by certificates from the Rector. Persons from other denominations are received on application for confirmation, and rebaptism is sometimes recommended.

In the Reformed Episcopal Church adults are baptized on profession of faith and repentance, and all applicants for confirmation must make a similar confession.† "A communicant of another Christian Church in good standing may be received to the communion of this Church on a letter of dismission or other satisfactory evidence, on

* *Common Prayer.*

† *Common Prayer of the Reformed Episcopal Church.*

assenting to the distinctive principles of this Church." And a communicant may "be furnished with a certificate or letter of dismissal to any Christian Church."* The power is with the Rector.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church no one can be received into the Church until he has been on probation at least six months, been recommended by the Leaders and Stewards' Meeting, and has given to the Minister satisfactory assurance of the correctness of his faith and of his willingness to observe the rules of the Church. Persons in good standing in other orthodox churches are received on certificate at once, after giving satisfactory answers to the usual inquiries, to full fellowship.†

In the Congregational Church "persons are admitted to the church by a vote of the brethren." "Credible evidence of piety is a necessary prerequisite to communion and church membership." "If any of their members wish to unite with churches of other evangelical denominations, letters are given to such churches," and members of other churches "are received on certificate as from sister churches."‡ Generally there is a "Prudential Committee," composed of the Pastor and Deacons, to whom application for admission is made. If the applicants are approved by these, they are recommended to the church, and are examined as to their faith and knowledge, and are received by the vote of the brethren and a public assent to the Creed of the Church.

The Baptist churches are congregational in polity.

In the Lutheran Church persons applying for admission "must satisfy the church Council that they have sincerely

* *Canons of Reformed Episcopal Church*, title iii., canon 7.

† *Discipline, 1880*, Part I., ch. ii.

‡ *Congregational Manual*, pp. 7, 11, 14. *Congregationalism*, p. 183.

repented of their sins and truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" they must after instruction be confirmed.*

What is the fourth power of Session?

To administer discipline—"*to admonish, to rebuke, to suspend or exclude from the sacraments, those who are found to deserve censure*" (1 Cor. 11 : 27, to the end; 1 Thess. 5 : 12, 13, 14; 2 Thess. 3 : 6, 14, 15).†

What is meant by "found to deserve censure"?

Convicted on evidence in a formal trial. Censure upon an absent person, or without a trial, is invalid.‡ The plea of guilty may shorten the trial, but cannot render it unnecessary. Such was the decision of the N. S. Assembly in 1865 in the case of one who voluntarily confessed heretical sentiments and a breach of covenant, and who waived the formality of a trial in order to excommunication from the Church.§ In this decision reference is made to "Book of Discipline," ch. iv. The reasons seem to be, that the Session must judge of the circumstances and degree of guilt before passing judgment, which must always be proportional to the offence,‖ and a full record is necessary for review by the higher courts, and for reference in case of future profession of repentance and reformation. In 1879 the Assembly was asked, "If the accused person, before a committee regularly appointed by the judicatory for private interview, confess guilt and willful persistence in sin, and, afterward appearing before the judicatory upon the first citation, again confesses guilt and willful persistence in sin, may the judicatory proceed to pass their sentence without

* *Formula of Government*, ch. iv., sect. v.

† *Book of Discipline*, chs. i., ii., iii. and iv., sect. xvii.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 501.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 505.

‖ *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv., sect. xvii.

further process of trial?" The Assembly replied "in the affirmative."* The Southern Presbyterian Church says: "When any person shall come forward and make his offence known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded, and judgment rendered without process."†

How is discipline administered in other churches?

In Episcopal churches the power of discipline is in the hands of the Rector of the church.

In Methodist churches all the communicants are divided into classes. It is the duty of the Class-leaders to inquire how each member observes the rules of the Church and grows in the knowledge and love of God. The Class-leader must report the condition of his class to the monthly meeting of the Pastor, Leaders and Stewards. In case of inconsistent conduct, the offender is reproved and exhorted by his Class-leader. If there be no reformation, he is visited by the Pastor, his Leader and two or three members. If he will not hear these, charges are presented to the Pastor, who appoints a committee of communicants to try him and pronounce sentence. A probationer is dropped from the roll without process, by a decision of the Leaders and Stewards' meeting.‡

In Congregational churches "unworthy members are also excluded by the same power"—the vote of the brethren. "If a member be convinced that he is not truly regenerate, . . . and shall request a dissolution of his connection with the church, if there be no scandal in his life requiring discipline, his request shall be granted,

* *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 613.

† *Book of Church Order*, Part II., ch. xii., sect. i.

‡ *Discipline, 1880*, ¶¶ 57, 223–239.

after due labor first used, by a simple vote declarative of the facts, which vote shall be publicly announced at the next communion season." *

In the Lutheran Church the discipline of communicants is administered by the church Council.†

What is the fifth power of Session mentioned?

"*To concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interest of the congregation.*" This includes (1) sessional visitations and whatever may promote the orderly lives of church members or the unity of the congregation; (2) the charge of the worship, maintaining the means of grace, church services, prayer-meetings, Sabbath-schools, mission-stations, the music of the church, etc; (3) the activities of the members in mission operations, care of the poor and making contributions; (4) the conducting of congregational meetings for the election of Pastor, Elders and Deacons, and for other purposes.

How are sessional visitations to be conducted?

The Session must determine how, in the peculiar circumstances of each church and of each individual, these visitations can be conducted best for edification. The old custom, of appointing a special season in which the whole congregation shall be visited, has proved to be very beneficial. Committees of two or more Elders are often appointed to visit, with the Pastor, every family, and to minister, as may be found necessary, to the spiritual needs of each. Often the whole congregation is divided into districts, and each committed to the special charge of certain Elders, who should keep the Session and Pastor informed as to the condition of all under their care. Be-

* *Congregational Manual*, pp. 7, 21; *Congregationalism*, p. 188.

† *Formula of Government*, ch. iv., sect. viii.

sides this general visitation, there must always be more frequent and special visits made to (1) the baptized members of the church, especially when they come to years of discretion;* (2) those persons under conviction of sin or spiritual distress (Isa. 40 : 1); (3) the sick (James 5 : 14–16);† (4) the afflicted (James 1 : 27; 2 Cor. 1 : 4).‡ Sessions are to take the most effectual methods to discountenance all ostentatious and expensive parades and the old custom of using spirituous liquors at funerals.§ (5) To the poor;‖ (6) the tempted (Gal. 6 : 1; Eph. 5 : 11); (7) those guilty of offence and under suspension (Gal. 6 : 1; Rom. 15 : 1; 2 Thess. 3 : 15; 2 Tim. 2 : 25).¶

What control has the Session over the worship?

(See pp. 74–95.)

What is the relation of the Session to the Sabbath-schools?

This question was overtured to the Assembly in 1877, which replied by referring to the deliverances of the two branches of the Church recorded in "Presbyterian Digest," pp. 643–645.** The principal statements there made are: (1) The Sabbath-schools are under the direction of the Pastor and Session, who must direct and supervise the whole work of the spiritual training of the young.†† (2) The pastoral office involves supervision of the Sabbath-school, and the Pastor should frequently be present and aid in the work, and hold special meetings for children, and often preach to them. (3) The Session should determine the studies to

* *Directory for Worship*, ch. ix. † *Ibid.*, ch. xii.
‡ *Ibid.*, ch. xiii. § *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 695. ‖ See p. 47.
¶ *Directory for Worship*, ch. x., sects. i., ii., iv.
** *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 516. †† See pp. 106, 131.

be pursued, the text-books and lesson-papers and helps to be used, and should carefully examine every book admitted into the library. The publications of our own Board are specially recommended. (4) The Bible should be "the great text-book." The "Shorter Catechism" should be carefully taught, that the doctrine and polity of the Church may be fixed in the memory. (5) The statistical reports of the Sabbath-schools should be regularly furnished to Presbytery and embodied in the Assembly's Minutes. (6) It is desirable that the whole congregation should be connected with the Sabbath-schools, as teachers or scholars. In 1878 the Assembly issued a pastoral letter to the Sessions on this subject, specially urging the importance of sound doctrinal teaching, and recommending the question-books, papers, Catechisms and the standards of doctrine, polity and worship published by the Board of Publication.* In the same year the Assembly "recommended that in all our Sabbath-schools superintendents be chosen or appointed subject to the approval of the church Session;" "that the Pastor and Session visit, encourage, and if need be work in, the Sabbath-school."† The Session, having the supervision of the music of the church,‡ have direction concerning that of the Sabbath-school.§ In 1878 the Assembly referred to the favorable consideration of the Board of Publication an overture praying "to initiate measures for securing unobjectionable hymns and the choicest music for Sabbath-school use."‖ Appendix, p. 522.

What control has the Session over the collections?

The collections for the poor are placed in the hands of

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, pp. 95–97. † *Ibid.*, p. 26.
‡ See p. 76. § See p. 131. ‖ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 30.

the Deacons.* In regard to other collections, see pp. 64 and 109.

What power has the Session over the congregation as such?

It can, whenever it judges it advisable, call a meeting of the congregation and propose the business to be considered. The Moderator of the Session presides in virtue of his office. His decisions can only be overruled by an appeal to Presbytery, to which he is responsible. If an Elder preside,† an appeal can be taken to the Session, but not to the congregation.‡ The Clerk of Session must be clerk of such meeting, and shall keep a full record in a book provided for that purpose, but not in the sessional record-book. Appeals, protests, complaints from the action of such a meeting, must be brought before the Session, and, if necessary, to the higher courts.§ Concerning other congregational meetings, see p. 39.

When must the Session call a congregational meeting?

Whenever, in the judgment of the Session, it is advisable, or "when a majority of the persons entitled to vote in the case shall by petition request that a meeting shall be called."‖

Can the Session refuse to call such meetings?

It must act according to its judgment, subject in this as in all things to Presbytery. The matter may come before Presbytery on review or by petition or complaint from members of the congregation.¶

For what purposes may it call congregational meetings?

(1) To elect Elders and Deacons.** The Session may

* See pp. 63 and 70. † See p. 126.

‡ *Manual of Presbyterian Law and Usage*, pp. 40, 41.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 39, 40. ‖ *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. i.

¶ *Ibid.*, ch. xv., sect. i.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 338, 403.

** *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. ii.

nominate candidates, but this must not interfere with the liberty of choice. Elders can only be elected at a meeting called by the Session or by a higher judicatory.* Only communicants can vote.†

(2) To elect a Pastor.‡ All communicants can vote, and also non-communicants who contribute to the support of the Pastor, except where the charter of the church or the usage of the congregation confines the right of voting to the communicants.§ A Minister of the Presbytery shall preside, or, if very inconvenient to obtain one, a member of the Session may do so.‖ If the meeting proceed contrary to the judgment of Session, appeal may be made to the Presbytery; or the congregation, with the concurrence of Session, may refer the matter to Presbytery for advice or final decision.¶

(3 To consider the desire of the Pastor to resign his charge. This may be at the Pastor's request that the congregation join him in a petition to Presbytery, or to appoint commissioners to answer the citation of Presbytery which is about to consider the Pastor's resignation. Or such a meeting may be called by the Session on its own motion or when properly requested to do so, when the congregation shall have labored under such grievances as that they shall desire to be released from their Pastor.**

(4) For anything pertaining to the spiritual interests of the church. Communicants have the right to vote, and contributors whenever money-matters are involved,

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 337, 338. † See p. 56.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. i. See p. 335.

§ *Ibid.*, ch. xv., sect. iv.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 404, 405.

‖ See p. 126.

¶ *Manual of Law and Usage*, p. 41; *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. ii., sub-sect. iii. ** See p. 374. *Form of Government*, ch. xvii.

unless the charter or usage of the congregation confine the right to communicants.*

What is the sixth power of Session mentioned?

"*And to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the Church;*" that is, to the Presbytery and Synod.† Those to the General Assembly are appointed by the Presbyteries.‡ The Pastors and Ministers are by ordination members of Presbytery and Synod. The Session selects an Elder as delegate to attend each meeting of these higher courts. In regard to delegates to special or adjourned meetings of these judicatories, see p. 179. (See also p. 238.)

Is it optional with the Session to appoint delegates?

No; it is a duty. The people have a right to be represented in all the courts of the Church,§ which need the presence of the Elders, and which should censure the Session if they have neglected to make the appointment, or require the Session to censure the delegate for his neglect of duty, in lateness, in withdrawing without leave or in absence. The O. S. Assembly in 1859 reproved a Synod because "the Ruling Elders were not called upon for reasons of absence, as in the case of Teaching Elders."‖ In 1840 the N. S. Assembly found fault with a Synod for "censuring" (an Elder) "at their bar in a way competent in any circumstances only to the Session of the church, to which he was primarily amenable."¶

Whom may the Session appoint as delegate?

Any of the Elders, members of its own body. Those churches which have adopted the "term-elder-

* *Manual of Presbyterian Law and Usage*, p. 39.
† *Form of Government*, ch. x., sect. ii.; ch. xi., sect. i.
‡ *Ibid.*, ch. xii., sect. ii.
§ *Ibid.*, ch. x., sect. iii.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 131.
¶ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

ship" may appoint an Elder whose term of service has expired.*

VII. Who has power to convene the Session?

"*The Pastor has power to convene the Session when he may judge it requisite, and he shall always convene them when requested to do so by any two of the Elders. The Session shall also convene when directed to do so by the Presbytery.*" The Session may meet according to its adjournment.†

Are the meetings of Session open or private?

All the judicatories of the Church hold open meetings, yet they "have a right to sit in private on business which in their judgment ought not to be matter of public speculation." "Besides the right to sit judicially in private," etc.‡ In 1879 the Assembly was requested to order that "in all cases of accusation against a Minister or Ruling Elder, the Presbytery" (or Session) "consider carefully at the opening of the case the question of the propriety of exercising its constitutional right to sit with closed doors, admitting, besides the witnesses and parties necessarily present, only such persons as they may deem necessary to give proper publicity to the proceedings." No action was taken further than to refer the paper to the favorable consideration of the committee to revise our "Book of Discipline."§ But the next year an overture was presented in regard to the disorder often occasioned at ecclesiastical trials by the presence of large numbers of spectators, and it was resolved "that the General Assembly recommend to its subordinate judicatories that, before entering upon

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. viii.

† *General Rules for Judicatories*, i. See p. 490.

‡ *Ibid.*, xxxviii. and xxxix.

§ *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 615.

judicial process, they carefully determine what degree of privacy or publicity in the proceedings would be most conducive to the ends of justice, the peace of the Church and the spiritual benefit of the person tried."*

What is an interlocutory meeting?

"All judicatories have a right to hold what are commonly called 'interlocutory meetings,' in which members freely converse together, without the formalities which are usually necessary in judicial proceedings."†

Can a Session invite a Minister or Elder to sit as a corresponding member?

The constitution makes no provision for corresponding members in Session, as it does for them in the Presbytery and Synod.‡ The N. S. Assembly in 1851 decided that even a Minister of the same Presbytery or Synod could not be invited to sit in Session as a corresponding member, nor could he be assigned as counsel to an accused person.§ A retired Elder, or one whose term has expired, has no jurisdiction until re-elected and installed. He may of course be present at any open meeting, give advice when asked, but can have no right to speak on resolutions or vote or act as counsel.‖

VIII. May the Session appoint a Clerk?

"Every judicatory shall choose a Clerk to record their transactions, whose continuance shall be during pleasure. It shall be the duty of the Clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records carefully, and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required."¶

* *Minutes G. A. 1889*, p. 23. See p. 496.

† *General Rules for Judicatories*, xxxix. ‡ See pp. 230, 238.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 124.

‖ *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv., sect. xxi.

¶ *Form of Government*, ch. xx.

Who is the Clerk of Session?

The Session may appoint its own Clerk. In 1861 the the N. S. Assembly decided that the Clerk need not be a member of the judicatory; any convenient person may be selected.* This had been in 1793 decided to be proper in regard to the Clerk of the General Assembly.† It is evident that the Clerk should be under the jurisdiction or authority of the court, as he has charge of the records. In small Sessions the Pastor frequently acts as Moderator and Clerk; there is no impropriety in this. In larger Sessions an Elder usually is appointed. In judicial business, when considerable testimony is to be recorded, it may be desirable, as it is allowable, to appoint a temporary clerk, as in the higher courts.

What are the duties of the Clerk?

(1) "*Every Session shall keep a fair record of its proceedings, which record shall be at least once every year submitted to the inspection of the Presbytery.*" (2) The Clerk shall "preserve the records carefully." This includes the care of all the papers and books pertaining to the business of Session and the registers referred to on p. 169; (3) he shall "grant extracts from the records whenever properly required," (4) make authenticated copies of judicial cases when these are needed, and prepare all necessary papers in cases of reference, appeal or complaint; (5) he shall issue certificates and citations by order of Session; (6) he shall prepare the statistical reports for Presbytery; (7) he shall keep a fair record of the proceedings of all congregational meetings called by the Session.‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 461. † *Ibid.*, p. 211.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xx.; *Book of Discipline*, ch. vi., sect. x.; ch. vii.

Should the record be full?

The record should be full, especially in judicial cases, including the testimony of witnesses. "The reasons for all decisions, except on questions of order, shall be recorded at length, that the record may exhibit everything which had an influence on the judgment of the court."* In 1859 the O. S. Assembly decided that testimony duly authenticated and on file, carefully preserved, may be considered a part of the record. But in 1841 the O. S. Assembly was about to remit a case, because a paper admitted to be a part of it was not engrossed on the records: the paper was, however, read, and the case decided. And the N. S. Assembly in 1862 declared that the testimony of witnesses must be recorded "on the book of permanent records."† Files are liable to be lost.

How shall extracts of the record given by the Clerk be regarded?

They should be certified by him as true copies of the record, and "such extracts, under the hand of the Clerk, shall be considered as authentic vouchers of the fact which they declare, in any ecclesiastical judicatory, and to every part of the Church."‡ If they have been printed and are certified by the Clerk, they shall be considered as authentic, and the distribution of the printed form among the members of the higher court in a judicial case may, by mutual consent, be accepted in place of the reading of the record in whole or in part.§

To whom may the Clerk give extracts?

The records are the property of the Session, and the

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv., sect. xxiii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 132, 515, 537.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 515, 516.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xx.

§ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 53. See p. 189.

extracts can only be given by the order of Session. "The parties" in a judicial case "shall be allowed copies of the whole proceedings, at their own expense, if they demand them."* In 1879 the Assembly was asked if "a Minister once suspended, but afterward restored, may demand that the records in his case be closed to inspection or transcript, when required by subsequent judicial proceedings by his own Presbytery?" The reply given was: "The records of our church courts are public, and not private, documents, and therefore no one who has been under discipline can demand that anything pertaining to his case shall be closed to inspection or transcript. Yet a wise Christian charity would suggest that when the end of discipline in the restoration of an offender has been reached, no further publicity, if possible, should be given to the matter."†

How often must the records be submitted to Presbytery?

At least once each year. "And if any lower judicatory shall omit to send up its records for this purpose, the higher may issue an order to produce them, either immediately or at a particular time as circumstances may require."‡ Copies of the record, attested, were accepted in 1790 in place of the originals, when it was inconvenient to send the books. The O. S. Assembly in 1840 rescinded the permission, and in 1847 refused to receive attested copies in place of the original records.§ So did the Assembly in 1878.‖

In what respects must the records be examined?

"In reviewing the records of an inferior judicatory

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv., sect. xvi.

† *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 586.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. i., sub-sect. i.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 534. § *Ibid.*, p 536. ‖ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 52.

it is proper to examine, first, whether the proceedings have been constitutional and regular; secondly, whether they have been wise, equitable and for the edification of the Church; thirdly, whether they have been correctly recorded." If everything is satisfactory, the records are by order of Presbytery approved as far as written, and signed by the Moderator. If anything is found out of order, the minutes are approved with exceptions "by simply recording on its own (the Presbytery's) minutes the animadversion or censure which it may think proper to pass on records under review, and also by making an entry of the same in the book reviewed. But it may be that in the course of review, cases of irregular proceedings may be found so disreputable and injurious as to demand the interference of the superior judicatory. In cases of this kind the inferior judicatory may be required to review and correct its proceedings."*

What effect has the approval of the records?

After approval by Presbytery the records cannot be altered or annulled by the Session. If an error is found, it can be corrected only "by an application to the highest court that has endorsed the mistake." So the N. S. Assembly decided in 1862.† In 1878 the Assembly disapproved of a lower court correcting its record after the endorsement of a higher. In 1880 a Synod received permission to correct its records.‡ The O. S. Assembly in 1841 sustained the decision of the Moderator that the records of a lower court having been approved, the approval cannot be amended, being a minute recording a fact, but by a unanimous vote of the house.§

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. i., sub-sects. ii. and iii. See p. 221.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 133.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 52; *1880*, p. 81.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 535.

In 1879 the Assembly declared that "the constituted right of appeal 'either from a part of the proceedings of a judicatory or from a definite sentence,' and the right of complaint 'respecting a decision by an inferior judicatory,' 'either before its rising or within ten days thereafter,' cannot be in any way affected by the approval of the minutes of the judicatory against the action of which the appeal or complaint may be taken."*

IX. What registers must the Session keep?

"*It is important that every Session keep a fair register of marriages; of baptisms, with the time of the birth of the individuals baptized; of persons admitted to the Lord's table; and of the deaths, and other removals of church members;*" of those under church discipline;† of absent members (reserved list)‡ and of baptized members. In 1881 the Assembly directed "church Sessions to exercise greater care in preserving accurate rolls of their baptized children who are not communicants."§ These registers are kept by the Pastor or Clerk. Appendix, p. 523.

What reports must the Session prepare?

(1) An annual narrative of the state of religion, to be presented to Presbytery, generally at the spring stated meeting; (2) a similar narrative to be presented at the annual meeting of Synod, which is generally held in the autumn. These should each be the narrative for a whole year, the one of the presbyterial year, and the other of the synodical year, the Board of Publication to furnish blanks.‖ (3) The statistical report to Presbytery, to be transmitted to the General Assembly. This should be pre-

* *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 613.
† *Directory for Worship*, ch. x., sect. ii.
‡ See p. 150.
§ *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 548.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 591.

sented at the spring meeting, and should include—numbers of Elders and Deacons, number added on examination and on certificate, whole number of communicants, adult baptisms, infant baptisms, Sabbath-school membership, the amount contributed to the eight causes recommended by the General Assembly, to the General Assembly's expenses, to congregational purposes and to miscellaneous objects. These reports should all be formally adopted by the Session, and engrossed on the records as part of the minutes of Session. This is implied in the recommendation of the Assembly to Presbyteries and Synods in 1870.* In 1869 the N. S. Assembly ordered that the statistical report should contain only the actual membership—that the utmost care should be taken to clear the register of all deceased, dismissed and lost members.† The O. S. Assembly in 1856 also ordered the omission of all absent members whose residences are unknown. Their names should be put on a reserve list, and not counted in the statistical report.‡ This was ratified in 1872.§

How must the meetings of Session be opened and closed?

They should always be opened and closed with prayer. This fact should be stated on the records.‖ "While we have no law requiring the closing of the sessions of the church Session with prayer, yet by the deliverances of the past General Assemblies the omission to close any session of any of the judicatories of the Church with prayer has been pronounced out of harmony with the 'Form of Government;' but a recess does not imply

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 177.
† *Ibid.*, p. 133.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 627.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 628. See pp. 148–150.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

the close of a Session."* Informal meetings, however, are often held.†

What is the lowest judicatory of other churches called?

Neither the Episcopal nor the Congregational Church has any judicatory in the particular church. In the former the Priest exercises discipline, and in the latter the church itself, though often according to the advice of a Prudential Committee. In regard to the Methodist Church see p. 156. In the Lutheran Church the church Council corresponds with our Session, as does the Consistory in the Reformed (Dutch) Church.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE PRESBYTERY.

I. Is it important that the separate congregations should have some bond of union?

Christ regarded it important (John 10 : 16), and he prayed for it (John 17 : 20, 21). He did not expect nor aim to bring all his sheep into one flock, nor did he pray that all who should believe on him should be in one place on earth, but he labored and prayed that all might be under one Shepherd, and one with him and with each other, in love and under government. The Apostles taught the necessity of the unity of the churches, their mutual dependence, and the subjection of all to the Epistles, whether general or addressed to the churches in certain cities. "The church of Jerusalem consisted of more than one (congrega-

* *Form of Government*, ch. x., sect. xi.; ch. xi., sect. v.; and ch. xii., sect. viii.; *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p 575. † See p. 126.

tion), as is manifest both before and after the dispersion, from Acts 6 : 1, 6; 9 : 31; 21 : 20; 2 : 41, 46, 47; and 4 : 4. These congregations were under one presbyterial government, proved from Acts 15 : 4; 11 : 22, 30; 21 : 17, 18; 6 : That the church of Ephesus had more congregations than one, under a presbyterial government, appears from Acts 19 : 18, 19, 20; 1 Cor. 16 : 8, 9, 19, compared with Acts 18 : 19, 24, 26; 20 : 17, 18, 25, 28, 30, 31, 36, 37; Rev. 2 : 1–6." *

All branches of the Christian Church have felt the necessity, and have established some bond of union for mutual counsel and assistance.

What is the first object of such a union?

"*To preserve soundness of doctrine.*" Individual members and churches often adopt errors, and if isolated these errors become confirmed and lead to other perversions of truth. If each church may adopt or change its creed at pleasure, there can be no uniformity of faith nor certainty of truth. If, however, churches are bound together by a definite form of government, their mutual oversight and zeal for the truth will detect errors, repudiate heresies, define and defend sound doctrine and silence false teachers.

What is the second object of this union?

"*To preserve regularity of discipline.*" Uniformity of discipline is very important. What one church allows ought not to be condemned by another. There should be the same terms of communion, the same rules for judging the outward conduct of members, and the same methods of convicting and restoring offenders. There should be some means of correcting the misapplication of discipline. This can only be accomplished by a real union.

* *Form of Government*, ch. x., sect. i., note.

What is the third object of this union?

"*To enter into common measures for promoting knowledge and religion, and for preventing infidelity, error and immorality,*" such as an educated ministry, religious publications, extension of the Church at home and abroad, general education and morality. The churches have a responsibility concerning not only their own members, but also the condition of the world without, in which different forms of infidelity and immorality are constantly reappearing. To oppose these the individual churches can do but little, and their efforts would often prove fruitless, because conflicting. Concerted action and a united testimony for the truth and against errors and iniquity accomplish much.

Are these objects accomplished by presbyterial and synodical assemblies?

"*Hence arise the importance and usefulness of presbyterial and synodical assemblies.*" For any errors in doctrine or irregularities in discipline in particular churches are discovered and corrected by the higher courts; which, having a general supervision, can also determine all matters concerning the churches and the influence to be exerted on the community at large.*

What is the bond of union in the Roman Catholic Church?

The Pope—the recognition of and submission to the Pope as the infallible head of the Church, the vicegerent of Christ on earth, who claims absolute authority, temporal and spiritual. The scriptural warrant for this is said to be Christ's charge to Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church;" "and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatso-

* *Book of Discipline,* ch. vii.

ever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16 : 18, 19). But in Eph. 2 : 20, 21, Rev. 21 : 14; 1 Cor. 3 : 11, and elsewhere, the Church is said to be built equally on all the Apostles, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." In Matt. 18 : 18 the same power of the keys, to bind and loose, is given alike to all the Twelve. And in no case does Peter assume superiority over the Apostles in the Christian Church. He did not even preside over the church at Jerusalem, nor over the Presbytery or Synod described in Acts 15.

What is the bond of union in the Episcopal Church?

Bishops, as the successors of the Apostles, having authority, each over the other clergy, the laity and the churches in his separate diocese, and as a body over the whole Church. The scriptural authority cited is the calling of the Apostles (Luke 6 : 13), the charge given to them (Matt. 28 : 19), the authority exercised by them (Acts 20 : 17), and the appointment of successors (Acts 1 : 16–26). The evident answer to this is—(1) that the apostolate was designed to be a temporary office;* (2) that at the time Christ gave his charge to the Apostles they represented the whole Church, and his charge was therefore to the Church; the authority he then gave was to be exercised for a time by these extraordinary officers, but permanently by the regular officers and courts of the Church; (3) that while the Apostles did possess universal and absolute authority for the organization of the Christian Church, it was because of their peculiar relation to Christ, their inspiration and their miraculous gifts, which were only temporary. But the powers needed permanently in the Church they exercised only together with the

* See p. 42.

permanent officers and courts. (4) They had no successors. Matthias was not a successor of Judas, but was substituted for that false Apostle. Paul, as "one born out of due time," was not a successor to any, but made the Apostle to the Gentiles (1 Cor. 15 : 8). Their peculiar gifts have ceased.* No provision for successors was made in the Scriptures, nor were qualifications given. Nor, in fact, have any since exercised the authority or performed the work of Apostles as described in the Scriptures.

What is the bond of union in the Methodist churches?

In the Methodist Church the bond of union is found in the Conferences, General, Annual and Quarterly.†

What is the bond of union in the Congregational Church?

In the Congregational Church fellowship between individual churches is expressed by Councils, which are called in cases of importance or difficulty for sympathy, advice and co-operation.‡ The church calling the Council may invite as many or as few churches as it deems best, and may adopt or reject the advice given. Some Congregational churches are consociated; that is, they mutually agree to call upon those thus associated whenever any matter of importance is presented to any one church. These Consociations, though resembling Presbyteries, possess no power nor supervision. The advice given should be followed as long as the church remains in the Consociation; the right to withdraw at any moment is recognized.

II. Of whom does the Presbytery consist?

"A Presbytery consists of all the Ministers, in number not less than five, and one Ruling Elder from each con-

* See p. 43.

† *Discipline*, 1880, ¶ 63–101.

‡ *Congregational Manual*, pp. 10, 20; *Congregationalism*, p. 3.

gregation, within a certain district." It may be formed without any organized churches, but must have a definite territory.* All churches and missionary operations within the bounds of the Presbytery must be under its care and government. This is true also in regard to Ministers. Yet Ministers coming within the bounds of a Presbytery can become members only by regular letters of dismissal from the Presbyteries to which they formerly belonged. If a Minister reside within one Presbytery and labor in another, he should unite with the latter. The Presbytery must judge in each case if there be sufficient cause to justify the membership of those who live beyond its geographical limits. In 1870 and 1872 the Assembly declared that "Ministers without charge are required to unite with that Presbytery within the geographical limits of which they ordinarily reside or are nearest to, and to which they shall be amenable for the proper discharge of their ordination engagements."† Appendix, p. 523.

Can two Presbyteries occupy the same ground?

No. It would be contrary both to the letter and spirit of our constitution and the teaching of the word of God. In 1873 the Assembly decided that no distinction can be made "of race or color or language to interfere with the unity and simplicity of that oversight which the constitution of this Church requires."‡

What are "elective-affinity" courts?

"Judicatories not bounded by geographical limits, but having a chief regard in their erection to diversities of doctrinal belief and of ecclesiastical polity." These are inconsistent with our "Form of Church Government,"

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 135. † *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 137.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 137, 138.

and would "open a wide door for mischiefs and abuses of the most serious kind," destroying the unity of the Church, purity of doctrine, uniformity of discipline and the peace of the churches.*

May a Presbytery consist of less than five Ministers?

Five are necessary even on missionary ground where four or more churches have been organized.* In 1877 a delegate was received by the Assembly whose commission was regular in form, but his Presbytery had fallen below the constitutional number of five Ministers. The Assembly resolved that the constitution "does not contemplate the dissolution of Presbyteries previously organized in remote and isolated regions with less than five members;" "that the General Assembly is disposed to excuse remote and isolated Presbyteries from strict compliance with certain general rules, when it shall appear that every reasonable effort has been made to comply with said rules."†

Are Ministers without charge members of Presbytery?

In Scotland they are under the care of Presbytery, are responsible to it, have a seat, and may speak on any resolution, but have no vote.

"According to the constitution of our Church, Ministers, as such, whether with or without charge, are of equal power and privilege. If the defection of any Minister from the duties implied in his ordination vows is serious enough to disfranchise him, it is sufficiently serious to call for the orderly exercise of discipline." This is the language of the O. S. Assembly of 1859; it expressed the decision of the Assemblies of 1802, 1816 and 1835.‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 135.

† *Ibid.*, p. 143; *Minutes G. A. 1877*, pp. 507, 549.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 136, 163.

Must the Presbyteries have geographical bounds?

"*Within a certain district.*" This implies that the Presbytery must have geographical bounds. In 1834 the Assembly decided that this ought to be so, "except in very extraordinary cases."* According to the terms of reunion in 1869, the boundaries of the several Synods and Presbyteries were adjusted by the Assembly of the united Church. This was done by the Assembly determining the bounds of thirty-four Synods, and requiring each of these to hold a special meeting to divide its allotted territory into certain districts and consign them to Presbyteries.† The bounds of Presbytery can be changed by Synod after approval by the Presbyteries interested. If the proposed change affects the boundaries of Synods, those Synods must be consulted and the matter referred to the General Assembly.‡ The Assembly may change the bounds of Presbytery.§

How are the churches represented in Presbytery?

"*One Ruling Elder from each congregation.*" "Ruling Elders are properly the representatives of the people." It is the duty of the Session "to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the Church."‖ The Session should appoint a delegate and an alternate for each and every meeting, whether regular or special, of the Presbytery, that the church may certainly be represented. It is the custom of some Sessions to appoint a delegate to serve for three or more months. There is nothing in the constitution to forbid this. An Elder who has retired from the active exercise of his office cannot be sent as delegate.¶

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 135, 137.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 182; *Minutes G. A. 1870*, p. 97.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 266.
§ See p. 257.
‖ See p. 162.
¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 115.

But when a church has adopted the rotary eldership, those Elders whose term of service has expired may be appointed by the Session delegates to Presbytery and Synod.* In Scotland a Minister without charge or an Elder of another church may be appointed by the Session to represent them in the higher judicatories. But according to our constitution the delegate to Presbytery must be an Elder of the church which he represents. The same delegate must be sent to an adjourned meeting of Presbytery who was present at the stated meeting, especially when the business partly considered is to be continued at the adjourned meeting.† In 1878 the Assembly was asked, If a delegate to Synod could represent his Session at an adjourned meeting of the Presbytery held during the intervals of the sessions of Synod? and may the Session appoint him delegate to Synod and to an adjourned meeting of Presbytery? The reply was: "No rule is laid down in our standards as to the particular term or time of service of delegates appointed by church Sessions to the higher judicatories of the Church." "It is left to each Session to prescribe the particular terms for which, or times at which, its delegates shall attend as its representatives in such judicatories. Under this view the first branch of the overture is answered in the negative, but the questions involved in both branches are subject in each individual case to the control of each Session."‡

If the delegate fail to appear, the Presbytery should call the Session to account for not appointing a delegate, or order it to inquire concerning the absence of the Elder or Elders appointed, and to pass censure if needed.§

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiii., sect. viii.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 131. ‡ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 69.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 131. See p. 162.

III. How many Elders may the Session send to Presbytery?

The previous section entitles every congregation to be represented by one Elder, the principle being that there shall be an equal number of Ministers and Ruling Elders in our judicatories. If a church has more than one Pastor, the church may send "*two or more Elders, in proportion to the number of its Pastors.*"* The application of this general principle would seem to require that when a church has two Pastors, one of whom is aged and infirm, but unable to attend the Presbytery, the Session can send only one Elder. "The term '*collegiate church*' is used in two senses—first, of a church with more than one Pastor; second, of two or more churches united under the care of one Pastor."* To these may be added a third: "a church which is united with others under the joint pastorate of several Ministers."† In any such case the number of Elders sent to Presbytery is determined by the number of its Pastors.

IV. How are two or more congregations united under one Pastor to be represented?

"*By one Elder,*" and for the same reason as above.* In such cases the Sessions of the several churches should alternate in electing a delegate to Presbytery. If these churches belong to different Presbyteries, they, while under one Pastor, shall belong to the Presbytery with which the Minister is connected, and be only there represented. When such pastoral relation ceases, the churches must return to their former Presbyteries.‡ This was reiterated in 1874.§ If the Minister has been installed over one church, and acts as Stated Supply of another, he is

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 138.
† *Webster's Dictionary.*
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 139.
§ *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 82.

not the Pastor of the latter;* and therefore both churches have a right to be represented.†

In our large cities a church will often sustain one or more missionary chapels. These frequently have no church organization, but form a part of the parent church, and are subject to its Session. They may have their own Pastors, who are appointed by the Session of the parent church, which also determines who may be admitted to the sacraments administered in the chapels. Those worshiping there have no voice in the temporal or spiritual affairs of the chapels, nor are they expected to take part in the business-meetings of the church. They are virtually without discipline, except the pastoral oversight of their own Ministers, for the members of the Session of the church do not know them and have no oversight. The chapel congregations can have no representation in Presbytery, but their Ministers, being ordained, have seats. These city-mission chapels are not therefore established according to Presbyterian principles, and should be regarded as temporary, preparing for full organization as independent churches, or else should be permitted to elect Elders and be recognized as mission churches, supervised and aided by the parent church or by the Board of Missions, and having the right of representation in Presbytery.

V. How are vacant churches to be represented?

A vacant church is one which has no Pastor duly installed over it. It may have a Stated Supply, who may have served them for several years (an evil to be discountenanced, and terminated as soon as practicable),‡ or it may, with other churches, be statedly ministered unto by a domestic Missionary without installation. In either

* See p. 48. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 138. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

case the church is vacant, and is entitled to representation in Presbytery by an Elder. So the O. S. Assembly decided in 1860.* The reasons are (1) that the Stated Supply or Missionary, as such, has neither authority nor seat in the Session;† (2) that every congregation has a right to representation;‡ and (3) while vacant they have special need of the oversight and care of Presbytery. This rule is evidently right, yet at times may give a domestic Missionary or the Elders of feeble churches an undue influence in Presbytery. The evil, however, is practically counteracted by the fact that Ministers are almost always more numerous than the Elders in the meeting of that body, and every act must be reviewed by the higher courts.

VI. How are Elders to be accredited?

"*Every Elder not known to the Presbytery shall produce a certificate of his regular appointment from the church which he represents.*"

VII. What is a quorum of Presbytery?

"*Any three Ministers, and as many Elders as may be present, belonging to the Presbytery, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business.*"

If no Elder be present, the three Ministers form a quorum. Such was the decision of the O. S. Assembly in 1843 and 1844, and was defended on the ground "that Ministers are not only preachers of the gospel and administrators of sealing ordinances, but also Ruling Elders in the very nature of the office," and that the absence of Elders "does not prevent the Presbytery from constituting and transacting business," since the churches had the right to send delegates to take part in all acts of

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 139. † See p. 127. ‡ See p. 178.

government and discipline.* The N. S. Assembly seems to have taken no action on the question, save in 1857 to declare that two clerical members did not form a quorum of Presbytery.† The Southern Presbyterian Church requires the presence of an Elder to form a quorum: "Any three Ministers belonging to the Presbytery, together with at least one Ruling Elder, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business."‡

May less than three Ministers be a quorum?

"*Three Ministers, with as many Elders as may be present,*" are necessary. Two may meet and adjourn from time to time until another arrives,§ but can do nothing else. They cannot receive a Minister who is present with a certificate from another Presbytery, and thus form a quorum. The reception of a member is the act of a Presbytery, and not of a committee, nor can the act of less than a quorum be legalized by the quorum thus obtained.‖ But the General Assembly can make it valid.¶

In peculiar cases, where by death or removals the Presbytery has been reduced to two members, they may receive new members and transact business with the quorum thus obtained, but such reception and business have no validity until sanctioned and legalized by the General Assembly.** Less than a quorum cannot table charges nor take any steps toward discipline, because such acts

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 139. See also *Church Polity*, p. 300.
† *New Digest*, p. 134.
‡ *Book of Church Order*, ch. v., sect. iv., sub-sect. iii.
§ *General Rules for Judicatories*, iii. See p. 491.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 141.
¶ *Minutes G. A. 1877*, pp. 529, 549.
** *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 143.

belong to the Presbytery,* which cannot consider charges received "by individuals usurping its prerogatives." Nor can less than a quorum appoint commissioners to the General Assembly. Such commissioners cannot be admitted to seats.†

VIII. What is the first power of Presbytery?

"*To receive and issue appeals from church Sessions and references brought before them in an orderly manner.*"

What is the difference between an appeal and a reference?

"A reference is a judicial representation made by an inferior judicatory to a superior, of a case not yet decided," "for mere advice preparatory to a decision by the inferior judicatory, or for ultimate trial and decision by the superior;" while "an appeal is the removal of a cause already decided from an inferior to a superior judicatory, by a party aggrieved," for a change of sentence.‡ In the former case the higher is called upon to help the lower court in its duty; in the latter case it must verify or correct the action of the lower court. An appeal can be made only "by a party aggrieved," who has submitted to a regular trial before the inferior judicatory. A reference is made "by an inferior judicatory to a superior."‡ An appeal, if in order, must be heard and decided by the higher court, but a reference may be returned, "either with or without advice, back to the judicatory by which it was referred."‡

What is a complaint?

Before 1821 no distinction was made between a complaint and an appeal; the usual expression was, "We

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. iii., sect. v.; ch. v., sects. ii. and v.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 141.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sects. ii. and iii.

complain and appeal."* "A complaint is a representation made to a superior, by any member or members of a minority of an inferior judicatory, or by any other person or persons, respecting a decision by an inferior judicatory, which, in the opinion of the complainants, has been irregularly or unjustly made."† If in order, and if in respectful language, the complaint must be heard.† It cannot be dismissed "on the ground that it is not against a judicial decision."‡

Do the Scriptures recognize the right of appeal?

It is assumed in all that is said of the unity of the Church. There is but one law of God, which is binding upon all churches and the whole Church. Any misapplication of law is a wrong, not only to the individual or particular church, but to the body. The one member who suffers has a right to appeal to the whole Church, which suffers with it. It is recognized in the appointment of courts of appeal (Ex. 18 : 25, 27). The synagogues were subject to the Sanhedrim. The first Christian churches were not isolated, but were united under the Apostles and the recognized authority of general councils (Acts 15 : 5, 6, 19, 20).§

Should an appeal be answered with advice or authority?

Some denominations, as the Congregational, vest all authority in the local church, and accord to the assembly of churches only the right of advice or counsel. This gives the small body more authority than the larger, the part more than the whole. The local church may set at

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 548, note.
† *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. iv.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 117.
§ *What is Presbyterianism?* pp. 68–72.

naught the decision of the denomination, and persist in holding doctrines denounced as heretical, and continue discipline declared to be wrongly inflicted. The rights of individuals, the peace of particular churches and the purity of the whole body require that appeals be answered with authority (Acts 15 : 10, 19, 20, 23–29; 1 Cor. 5 : 3, 4, 12, 13).*

How should a reference be answered?

A reference may be for advice, in which case advice should be given.† But the advice thus given cannot lightly be set aside. It comes from the higher court, and must be respected. The reference may be "for ultimate trial and decision," or it may be an overture; in either case the decision of the Presbytery is of authority, and is binding until revoked by a higher judicatory.

What is meant by "in an orderly manner"?

According to the law and usage of the Church. (1) An appeal must come from the party aggrieved, (2) after submitting to a trial before Session; (3) a written notice must have been given to the Session, with reasons, within ten days after the sentence appealed from has been passed; (4) it must be lodged with the Clerk of the higher court before the close of the second day of their session; and (5) it must be couched in respectful language.‡

A complaint may come from any person or persons; notice, with reasons, must be given within ten days after the rising of the judicatory; it must be lodged with the Clerk of the higher court before the close of the second day of its meeting; and must be in respectful language.§

* See p. 117–122. † *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. ii.

‡ *Ibid.*, ch. vii., sect. iii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 564.

§ *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. iv.

A reference can come only from a judicatory, and in a case not yet decided, and must be in writing.*

What is the effect of a notice of appeal?

Notice of an appeal or complaint must be given in writing, with reasons, "before the judicatory appealed from, either before its rising, or within ten days thereafter;" if after the adjournment, it must be lodged with the Moderator, and the appeal, with reasons, must be lodged "with the Clerk of the higher judicatory before the close of the second day of their session." "The necessary operation of an appeal is to suspend all further proceedings on the ground of the sentence appealed from. But if a sentence of suspension, or of excommunication from church privileges, or of deposition from office, be the sentence appealed from, it shall be considered in force until the appeal shall be issued."† The O. S. Assembly in 1864 decided that an appeal against a certain action did not prohibit the Presbytery from acting as they thought necessary for the peace and prosperity of the Church, according to "Form of Government," ch. x., sect. viii.‡ In 1881 the Assembly decided that when a Presbytery dissolved a church and ordered the Elders to cease to exercise their office, "the effect of an appeal is to continue all the rights of the Elders as to representation in the higher courts until the appeal is finally issued by the higher judicatories."§ In a complaint and an appeal the reasons must be given within ten days, together with the notice.§ The same Assembly declared that "a complaint alone does not suspend or arrest the action complained of."‖

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. ii.
† *Ibid.*, ch. vii., sect. iii.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 589, 590.
§ *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 587.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 586.

How are appeals to be heard?

By the Presbytery sitting in a judicial capacity, after the Moderator from the chair has solemnly warned the Presbytery that "it is about to pass to the consideration of the business assigned for trial, and enjoined the members to recollect their high character as judges of a court of Jesus Christ, and the solemn duty on which they are about to enter."* The trial should be conducted strictly according to the "Book of Discipline," ch. vii., sect. iii.: "In taking up an appeal, after ascertaining that the appellant on his part has conducted it regularly, the *first* step shall be to read the sentence appealed from; *secondly*, to read the reasons which were assigned by the appellant for his appeal, and which are on record; *thirdly*, to read the whole record of the proceedings of the inferior judicatory in the case, including all the testimony and the reasons of their decision; *fourthly*, to hear the original parties; *fifthly*, to hear any of the members of the inferior judicatory in explanation of their decision or of their dissent from it. After all the parties shall have been fully heard, and all the information gained by the members of the superior judicatory from those of the inferior, which shall be deemed requisite, the original parties and all the members of the inferior judicatory shall withdraw; when the Clerk shall call the roll, that every member may have an opportunity to express his opinion on the case; after which the final vote shall be taken." Complaints are conducted in the same way.†

What shall be done if the records are not presented?

The Session may be censured for not presenting their records, having received due notice of the appeal, and

* *General Rules for Judicatories*, xl. See p. 496.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 560.

the Session may be cited to appear at a subsequent meeting with their records. But the case should be postponed until these are produced. The record-book or attested copies are necessary.*

Must the records be read?

With consent of parties the reading of the records may be dispensed with, when the facts are admitted by the parties.† The records may be printed and distributed to the members of the court, and if attested by the Clerk of the lower court, and with consent of parties, the reading may be omitted.‡ In 1847 the O. S. Assembly declined to examine an appeal, because the record was too voluminous, and because the interests of the Church would be better promoted by dismissing the case without further trial, the appellant consenting.§ In reading the record the O. S. Assembly permitted portions of the record, not referring to the issue in hand, to be omitted, both parties consenting.§

Who are the original parties?

"The original parties are the parties concerned in the origin of the dispute," the accuser and the accused. When common fame is the accuser, it would seem that the committee appointed to prosecute in the name of common fame should be regarded as one of the original parties. This the O. S. Assembly denied in 1859 and affirmed in 1861.‖

How are the members of the inferior judicatory to be heard?

They have a right individually to speak "in explana-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 560, 590; *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. iii., sub-sect. viii.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 561.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, pp. 22. 28, 32, 53.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 562.

‖ *Ibid.*, pp. 563, 580.

tion of the grounds of their decision, or of their dissent from it." This right cannot be denied. Yet it is not always claimed. It has been found that the inferior court can better express and defend their decision by appointing a committee to represent and plead their case; those dissenting from the decision sometimes have a committee to present their reasons for dissent.*

How shall the members of the inferior court retire?

The withdrawal may be construed either literally—then the members must leave the house: this has very frequently been insisted upon before the division, and by the O. S. Assembly as late as 1859—or metaphorically, when the members may remain, but must be silent, and are considered out of the house. This was allowed several times before the division. The N. S. body does not seem to have taken any action, nor has the reunited Church. The clause is generally understood literally.†

May an appeal be tried by a commission?

"A commission is an extraordinary committee of a church court, appointed either for some special business or to take cognizance of such as may arise during the vacations of the court. It differs from an ordinary committee in that it is empowered not only to inquire and prepare business for the action of the court, but also provisionally to come to any such determinations and enforce any such decisions as would be within the competence of the court itself. It differs from a court, as its decisions and determinations are merely provisionary and of force *ad interim*, and must be subject to the revision and ultimate determination of the court, by which they may be set aside and annulled, and which alone can by its sanc-

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. iii., sub-sect. viii.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 566.

tion, either tacit or express, give them permanent authority." The question upon the review of the acts of a commission is, "whether the court will recognize as its own the decrees provisionally passed in its name." It is not constitutional to try an appeal or complaint by a committee, but it is lawful to try by a commission. Yet as every disputant has the right to be heard by the whole court, trial by commission is allowable only with consent of parties.* Formerly commissions were often appointed to license Candidates, ordain Ministers, translate Pastors, terminate difficulties in congregations, organize churches, try cases, issue appeals, etc.†

May an appeal be dismissed?

It may when the appeal is not presented in an orderly manner;‡ when the appellant fails to appear in person or by counsel; when the records are absent; when no evidence is presented to sustain the allegations;§ when a previous decision covers the case;‖ when no one is aggrieved by the technical informality; when the reasons assigned are vague, insufficient.¶

May the verdict in the case by a civil court be reason for an appeal?

The verdict in the civil court is the application of a human law through its forms of trial, testimony and judgment. The Church has to do with a divine law and its own methods. That which is an offence in the Church may not be in the State. Often the State has forbidden what the Church commands. In cases of crimes the civil court may acquit or convict on a tech-

* See p. 218.
† *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 233–246.
‡ See p. 186.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 551–555, 595.
‖ *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 62.
¶ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, pp. 29, 68, 69, 81.

nicality which the Church cannot regard. Its verdict should be considered, with its reasons, in the original trial, but cannot determine the sentence of the Session. One pleading, under certain circumstances, "guilty" in the civil court, and acquitted by the Session, should have the confidence of the Church; and his plea in the former cannot be used as a reason for a complaint against the sentence of the latter.*

What may the decision be?

"The decision may be either to confirm or reverse, in whole or in part, the decision of the inferior judicatory; or to remit the cause, for the purpose of amending the record, should it appear to be incorrect or defective, or for a new trial." In case of a complaint, if it be well founded, "it may have the effect not only of drawing down censure upon those who concurred in the judgment complained of, but also of reversing that judgment, and placing matters in the same situation in which they were before the judgment was pronounced." Yet "the reversal of the judgment of an inferior judicatory is not necessarily connected with censure of that judicatory." †

How is the vote taken?

After the expression of opinion by the members of the court,‡ the roll is called a second time, and the usual form of the vote is, "Shall the appeal be sustained?" and the members answer either "Sustain," or "Sustain in part," or "Not sustain." The result is declared under these three heads. The question should be put upon each charge separately, and then on the whole appeal. After the vote a committee should be appointed to bring in a

* *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 64.

† *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sects. iii. and iv. ‡ See p. 188.

minute expressive of the decision of the court, which should be recorded.*

Who may vote?

All the members of the court, except that "members of judicatories appealed from cannot be allowed to vote in the superior judicatory on any question connected with the appeal." So also in case of complaint.† No Minister or Elder who was a member of the judicatory when the vote appealed from took place can vote on the appeal. Such was the decision in 1792. In 1836 the Assembly decided that an Elder of the lower court could not vote, even though he was not a member of that court when the case was tried. But Ministers or Elders who were *in transitu*, dismissed before the trial in the lower court, but not received by another body, could vote on the appeal in the higher. The Moderator of the judicatory, if a member of the court appealed from, must retire from the chair while the appeal is being tried. Other members who may be personally interested in the result of the appeal may voluntarily retire or be challenged.‡

How are appeals made in other churches?

In the Episcopal Church a communicant who is guilty of "any wickedness of life" shall be repelled from the holy communion by the Rector, who shall inform the Bishop of the fact. The repelled party may within three months complain in writing to the Bishop, who may restore him "from the insufficiency of the cause assigned by the Minister," or he may institute an inquiry into the case, according to the canons of the diocese.§

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 567, 574; *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 60.

† *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. iii., sub-sect. xii., and iv., sub-sect. vii.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 579, 587, 588.

§ *Canons*, 1878, title ii., canon xii.

In the Reformed Episcopal Church an offending communicant must be regularly tried by a court composed of the Rector and Churchwardens of the congregation to which he belongs. He may have a Minister or a communicant as his counsel. If dissatisfied with the result of the trial, he may within ten days give notice of his intention to appeal. Within ten days after the notice he must present his appeal, with reasons, in writing, to the president of the court and to the Secretary of the General Council, by whom the appeal shall be tried.*

In the Methodist Church a member may appeal from the decision of the committee of communicants appointed to try him † to the next Quarterly Conference. "And if, in the judgment of the Presiding Elder," because of local prejudice, "an impartial trial cannot be had in the Quarterly Conference of the circuit or station where the appellant resides, he may, on the demand of either party, cause the appeal to be tried by any other Quarterly Conference within his district, after due notice to the complainant and appellant." ‡

In the Lutheran Church appeals of communicants from decisions of the church Council may be carried to the Synod.§

In Congregational churches, if any member thinks that he has been improperly disciplined, a mutual Council may be called, "chosen half by each party, to revise the case, and to give their opinion or advice to the church. In this advice both parties generally concur, though the church is not compelled to follow it when adverse to its own judgment. If the church should not concur in the

* *Canons*, 1874, title ii., canons iv., v., vi. † See p. 156.

‡ *Discipline*, 1880, p. 157.

§ *Formula of Government*, ch. viii., sect. iv.

result, a copy of the opinion of the Council would be a sufficient letter of recommendation for the aggrieved person with which to unite with another church. If the church refuse to unite with the complainant in calling a mutual Council, he may summon an *ex-parte* Council of such churches as he may please; and if that Council justify him, he may use their result as a letter of recommendation in applying to another church."*

What is the second power of Presbytery?

"*To examine and license Candidates for the holy ministry.*"† The Candidate must be recommended by the Session to the Presbytery, who directs his studies, examines and licenses him (1 Tim. 4 : 14; Acts 13 : 2, 3).‡

Who is a Candidate?

No one is recognized as a candidate until he has been received as such under the care of the Presbytery to which he naturally belongs, after a careful examination as to his piety, motives for desiring to enter the ministry, and qualifications for the work.§

To whom is he responsible?

He is still a member of the particular church, and therefore is responsible to the Session in all things concerning his Christian conduct. The Presbytery has the charge of his studies, and must be the judge of his diligence and ability, and decide when he may be licensed or his name be stricken from the roll of Candidates.‖

Upon what must he be examined?

See "Form of Government," ch. xiv.¶

* *Congregational Manual*, p. 11; *Congregationalism*, p. 214.
† *Form of Government*, ch. xiv. See p. 303.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 144.
§ *Ibid*, p. 365. See p. 299. ‖ *Ibid*, p. 402. ¶ See p. 319.

What is meant by license?

The grant of authority to preach the gospel. It is a part of trial of the Candidate's fitness for the ministry. It may be recalled when to the Presbytery "his services do not appear to be edifying to the churches." It is of force only during four years, and may be extended for the period of one more year. This is not to be understood "as abridging the power and discretion of the Presbyteries to license probationers in extraordinary cases." * In 1874 the Assembly said, "The determination of the sense of the words 'extraordinary cases' must be left to the Presbytery in connection with the circumstances of each case." † License must be with a view to the ministry, and not "as a means to attain a higher measure of usefulness merely, without aiming to reach ordination;" which "would be virtually to make two grades of preaching officers." ‡

In the Episcopal Church the Bishop exercises this power, on the recommendation of a committee appointed by the Standing Committee of the diocese. §

In Congregational churches the license is granted by the Association; that is, by a body composed of Ministers. "They meet for prayer and mutual counsel; they examine and approbate those who may wish to enter the ministry; and they make useful suggestions to the churches," but exercise no other ecclesiastical power. || In some places the license can be granted only by a Council called for that purpose by the church of which the Candidate is a member. This seems to be more in accordance with the principles of Congregationalism.

* *Form of Government*, ch. xiv., sect. xi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 401.
† *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 82. ‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 401.
§ *Canons*, 1878, title i., canon iii. || *Congregational Manual*, p. 10.

In the Baptist Church the local church may license those considered qualified. This is generally done when the Candidates begin their preparation for the ministry.

In the Methodist Church the Candidates are recommended by the Leaders' meeting to the Quarterly Conference, which grants the license after an examination by the Presiding Elder.* The license is given early in their course of training, and is renewed from year to year. Exhorters recommended by Leaders' meeting or by the class of which they are members, may be licensed by the Preacher in charge to exhort, but not to preach from a text.

In the Lutheran Church the Candidates are examined by a ministerial Session composed "exclusively of Scripture Elders—that is, Preachers"—which "is called a Ministerium or Presbytery." This body examine, license and ordain Candidates for the ministry.†

What is the third power of Presbytery?

"*To ordain, install, remove and judge Ministers*" (1 Tim. 4 : 14; Acts 13 : 2, 3).

What is ordination?

It is the solemn consecration of a person, by prayer and the laying on of hands, to an office in the Church.

The Romish Church regards it as the impartation of a certain grace or divine influence and power. It insists, therefore, on the necessity of apostolic succession and on the peculiar relation of those thus ordained to the Church and to Christ.

In the Episcopal Church much of this view has been retained, as is seen, in the stress laid upon apostolic succession and in the form of ordination. The Bishop says: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a

* *Discipline*, 1880, p. 69. See p. 361.

† *Formula of Government*, chs. xvii. and xviii.

Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands; whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained; and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God and of his holy sacraments: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." *

The Reformed Episcopal Church has adopted the view of ordination taken by most Protestant churches, and has omitted the above form and adopted that which, though optional, is seldom used in the Episcopal Church: "Take thou authority to execute the office of a Presbyter in the Church of God, now committed unto thee, and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word," etc. †

The Methodist Church has changed it into a prayer or benediction: "The Lord pour upon thee the Holy Ghost for the office and work of an Elder in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the authority of the Church through the imposition of our hands; and be thou a faithful dispenser," etc. ‡

The Presbyterian form of ordination may be seen on p. 353.

By whom should ordination be performed?

The Catholic Apostolic Church hold that ordination can be performed only by the Apostles or by legates appointed by them in special cases.

The Episcopal Church hold that Ministers are of three orders, each having a distinct office and work. Deacons and Priests are ordained by the Bishop of the diocese, and Bishops by a number of Bishops.* The Reformed Epis-

* *Common Prayer.* See p. 358.

† *Common Prayer Reformed Episcopal Church.*

‡ *Discipline,* 1880, p. 329.

copal Church at the ordination of a Bishop. "The Bishop presiding, and three or more Presbyters, with such other Bishops as may be present," shall join in laying on hands. Presbyters also join with the Bishop in the ordination of Presbyters, but not of Deacons.*

In the Methodist Church the Bishop, with the Elders present, lays on hands, except in the ordination of Deacons.†

In the Congregational Church the Council called to ordain a Candidate appoints a committee of two or more Ministers to perform the service in the presence of the Council.

In the Presbyterian Church, Ministers are ordained by the Presbytery (1 Tim. 4:14).‡ In the early part of the last century ordination was sometimes performed by a commission of Presbytery.§ The right to do so is not denied, because, unlike a committee, a commission acts in the name and power of the Court, and may be invested with whatever authority belongs to that body, even to try Ministers and issue appeals.‖ But the almost uniform custom now is to ordain by the Presbytery, and not by a commission. If the candidate be without the bounds of a Presbytery, as on missionary ground, he may not be ordained by a commission, even seeking the approbation of the Assembly.¶ Appendix, p. 519.

May ordination be by two Ministers?

In 1850 a candidate was examined and approved by a quorum of Presbytery, but when he was about to be ordained only two Ministers were present, who proceeded

* *Common Prayer Reformed Episcopal Church.*

† *Discipline*, 1880, pp. 323, 339, 345.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xv. See p. 353.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 145.

‖ See p. 190; *Church Polity*, p. 307; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 240.

¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 149.

to ordain. The O. S. Assembly recognized this to be irregular, but valid.*

Where should Ministers be ordained?

In the presence of the people among whom they are to labor.† Exceptions are often made in the case of Evangelists, who are "to preach in frontier or destitute settlements" beyond the bounds of Presbyteries, of foreign Missionaries, and where it is highly inconvenient or impossible.‡

Is lay ordination valid?

Whether performed by communicants, by Elders or by deposed Ministers, it is invalid. It must be by vote of Presbytery and by the laying on of the hands of Ministers. Neither can Elders or other laymen take part with Ministers in the act of ordination.§

Is the ordination of other denominations to be recognized?

Certainly. "The Presbyterian Church has always considered the ordination of most other Protestant churches as valid in themselves."‖ Romish ordination is not valid.¶ This is true also of Unitarian, of Campbellite, and of Universalist ordination.** But while the evangelical Protestant churches and their Ministers are recognized, Ministers applying to be received into the Presbyterian Church are required "to continue their study and preparation till they are found on trial and examination to be qualified in learning and ability to teach in the manner required by our standards; but that when found to be thus

* *Church Polity*, p. 305. † *Form of Government*, ch. xv.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 146, 149.
§ *Ibid.*, pp. 116, 117, 147. ‖ *Ibid.*, p. 147.
¶ *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 661; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 560; *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 630. ** *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 659, 674.

qualified it shall not be necessary to reordain said applicants." They must, however, formally "receive and adopt the 'Confession of Faith' of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures," the usual form being to give assent to the questions asked of the Candidate for ordination.* In 1880 the Assembly enjoined the Presbyteries, "when dealing with applications from Ministers of other denominations for admission into our Church, to demand of such applicants evidence of having had a course of collegiate and theological instruction equivalent to that demanded in the case of Candidates for the ministry under the care of our Presbyteries, and that such applicants shall be subject to a particular and careful examination in theology."† In all such cases the Presbyteries should "be careful to record the circumstances of the case, and the reasons which induced them to receive such ordained Minister."‡

Is ordination procured by fraud valid?

It is, but "the Presbytery should in such case proceed immediately to depose him who has been guilty of fraud."‡ Such was the decision of the O. S. Assembly in 1843.

May one be ordained who does not expect to devote his life to preaching the gospel?

Teachers, Professors, Editors, etc., whose work is approved by Presbytery, may be ordained *sine titulo*, provided, from a full view of their qualifications and circumstances, the Presbytery shall think it expedient to ordain them.§

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 55, 57, 147.
† *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 85. ‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 148.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 413.

May a Presbytery ordain a Candidate who is to labor within the bounds of another Presbytery?

The Assembly has earnestly recommended, as "our 'Form of Government' seems to recognize the right and privilege of each Presbytery to examine and ordain those who come to the pastoral office within their bounds, and who have never before exercised that office," that men who propose to pursue the work of the ministry in any section of the country where a Presbytery is already organized shall go as Licentiates, and there be ordained. The Congregational churches of New England were also requested not to ordain those who propose to labor in the bounds of our Presbyteries.*

May ordinations take place on the Sabbath?

There is no general rule on the subject. It is inconvenient for the Presbytery to meet on the Sabbath, and this, with other reasons, led the Assembly to say in 1821, "It is not expedient that ordinations should take place on the Sabbath, yet there may be cases in which urgent and peculiar circumstances may demand them."†

What is installation?

The settlement of a Minister over a congregation as its Pastor. The call from the church is sent to the Presbytery, and if approved is placed in the hands of the Licentiate or Minister. If it be accepted, the Presbytery may adjourn to meet at the church and ordain and install him, or, if he be a Minister, a committee may be sent to install him.‡

May the Presbytery refuse to install?

The congregation and Minister may be fully satisfied

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 146. † *Ibid.*, p. 148.

‡ *Form of Government*, chs. xv. and xvi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 149, 408, 416. See p. 346.

and unite in urging the pastoral relation, yet the Presbytery has the right to refuse. So the O. S. Assembly replied to an overture in 1855.* The "Form of Government," ch. xv., sect. ix., implies this right: "If the Presbytery think it expedient to present the call to him, it may accordingly be presented." In 1814 and in 1817 the Assembly defended the right of the Presbytery to refuse to put the call into a Minister's hands,† and again in 1875.‡

Can the terms of the call be afterward changed?

It is a mutual contract, and can be changed, therefore, by mutual consent, subject always to the review of the Presbytery. If, however, the parties do not agree in a proposed change, nothing can be done without the consent of Presbytery, because the terms of the call were the conditions upon which the Presbytery consented to the installation, and because that body has the supervision and charge of the pastoral relation.§

What is meant by "removing" Ministers?

Releasing them from the charge of a church. This may be done (1) at the Pastor's request; (2) on the petition of the congregation; (3) according to the desire of Pastor and people;‖ (4) when the Presbytery judges it expedient, even though the Pastor and his people remonstrate ¶ (this power ought to be exercised with great caution);** (5) at the petition of some other church which may desire his services; (6) the Synod may on appeal order the removal of a Pastor;¶ (7) the Presbytery, af-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 149, 408. † *Ibid.*, p. 549.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 510. See p. 347.
§ *Form of Government*, chs. xv., xvi. xvii.
‖ See pp. 371–381. ¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 150
** *Form of Government*, ch. xvi.

ter trying charges against a Pastor and finding him innocent, should "determine the question of the expediency of the continuance of the pastoral relation, in such a manner as they may judge to be just to the contending parties and for the interests of religion."* (8) The General Assembly may require his services elsewhere.

May a Minister be dismissed to another denomination or Presbytery while continuing Pastor of the church?

The church and Pastor must belong to the same Presbytery.† The Pastor is not entitled to join another body while continuing his pastoral relation.‡ He may not be dismissed if unsound.§

What is meant by "to judge Ministers"?

To have jurisdiction over them. Ministers are not accountable to the Session, nor primarily to the Synod or General Assembly, but to the Presbytery, which judges of their qualifications, determines their positions and work, and is responsible for their personal and official good standing. In case of charges brought against them the Presbytery must try them and give judgment.‖

May the Presbytery judge of the fitness of its members?

In all cases a Minister bringing proper testimonials from another Presbytery should be received, unless he has forfeited his good standing since his dismissal; in which case he is responsible to the Presbytery which dismissed him, and which must be informed of his misconduct, that they may examine the charges against him.¶ The rule of the General Assembly should be ob-

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 46. † See p. 180.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 150. § *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 103.

‖ *Form of Government*, chs. xvi., xvii.; *Book of Discipline*, chs. v. and x.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 150–170, 517–528.

¶ *Book of Discipline*, ch. x.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 153, 621, 622.

served—that Ministers should belong to the Presbytery within whose bounds they reside.* It is right also for the Presbytery to judge of the expediency of receiving those whose letters may be regular and good, but it should not refuse without sufficient reasons.† If there is any reasonable doubt of their piety or soundness in doctrine, the Presbytery has the right to satisfy itself by examination or by some other method. In 1837 the Assembly made it imperative on the Presbyteries to examine all applicants for admission. The next year the N. S. Assembly declared this order null and void, while not denying the right of Presbytery to satisfy itself of the fitness of its members. In the proposed plan of reunion the right to examine Ministers from other Presbyteries was distinctly asserted, but discretion was left to each Presbytery. In the final agreement of reunion it is thus expressed: "It is earnestly recommended to the lower judicatories of the Church that they conform their practice in relation to all such usages, as far as is consistent with their convictions of duty, to the general customs of the Church prior to the controversies that resulted in the separation."‡ In 1880 the Assembly recommended "that the matter be left to the Presbyteries, as the rightful judges of the qualifications of their own members."§ The right to examine is therefore claimed when there is reason for doubt or suspicion of unsoundness.

If a Minister be received hastily, and be found unworthy, can his reception be reconsidered?

No. He has been admitted, and his membership can be severed only by regular process.‡

* See p. 176.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 151.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 151–153.

§ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 56.

Can an applicant be rejected?

If the Presbytery be not satisfied with his qualifications, he may be refused, but there must be sufficient reasons for his rejection.*

May a Minister be received on a qualified letter?

A qualified letter cannot be given to a Minister. He can be received only on a certificate of good standing. So the O. S. Assembly decided in 1869.†

How can a Minister be received from an extinct Presbytery?

The Presbytery, after dismissing a Minister, becoming extinct, cannot examine charges of offences committed while *in transitu;* therefore the Presbytery to which he applies may receive him, and, if he be charged with an offence, conduct process against him. It has the right to decline receiving him; he may then appeal to Synod, and it ought to decline if there is no prospect of giving him an impartial trial. All such Ministers are under the jurisdiction of the Synod, which must take action.‡

How should Ministers and Licentiates from corresponding bodies be received?

Licentiates must answer in the affirmative the constitutional questions directed to be put to our own Candidates for licensure; and Ministers must give their assent to the first seven questions which are asked of those applying for ordination.§

How may a foreign Minister be received?

He must present his credentials to a committee of Presbytery, who shall inspect them and ascertain his soundness in faith and piety. The committee may allow him

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 151. † *Ibid.*, p. 153.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

§ See *Form of Government*, ch. xiv., sect. vii.; ch. xv., sect. xii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 152.

to preach in the churches until the next meeting of Presbytery, when he shall be examined and received on probation for one whole year, during which time he may exercise all the functions of a Minister except that he cannot vote in any church court nor accept a call. The case shall then be reported to Synod or the General Assembly for final action on his reception or rejection. If the Synod or General Assembly will not meet within three months after the end of his probation, the Presbytery may report to the meeting of the Synod or General Assembly which precedes the close of his probation, and receive directions and authority from the higher court to take final action. The year of probation must be spent within the bounds of one and the same Presbytery. If he be received on probation, and then revisits Europe, on his return he must undergo another probation. This rule was enforced by both branches of the Presbyterian Church by decisions rendered (O. S.) 1858 and (N. S.) 1855–69. In 1869 the probation was waived in cases where the Minister came from a Presbytery in correspondence with the Assembly. By the reunited Church further exception was made in favor of those coming from Presbyterian churches of Great Britain.* In other cases probation is necessary. The above rules were recognized by the Assembly in 1875 in the reception of a French Minister after probation, with consent of General Assembly, and in 1876 of a Swiss Minister.†

May a Minister be dismissed to a Presbytery to be erected?

Only when a higher court has given authority for its formation. So the O. S. Assembly decided.‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 155–159; Appendix, p. 523.

† *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 506, and *1876*, p. 80.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 154.

Who may grant letters of dismission?

The Presbytery alone. Neither the Moderator nor the Clerk, nor a committee of Presbytery, can dismiss Candidates, Licentiates or Ministers with or without charge.* The "Book of Discipline," ch. x., requires that the dismissal shall specify "the particular Presbytery or other ecclesiastical body with which he is to be connected;" and the Assembly of 1874 ordered that the name should "be retained upon the roll of the Presbytery dismissing him until notice of his reception be received from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery receiving him." †

May a Minister be dismissed to another denomination?

He may be dismissed by regular letter to those bodies which are in correspondence with the General Assembly. If unsound or disloyal, he should be reprimanded, and not dismissed as in good standing.‡ If a Minister should unite with another denomination without the consent of Presbytery, his conduct is disorderly, and his name should be dropped from the roll of members. Nothing further should be done unless he be chargeable with fundamental error or immorality, in which case he should be cited to answer the charges.§

May a Presbytery receive a Minister on a dismissal directed to another Presbytery?

The General Assembly of 1877 decided that "Book of Discipline," ch. x., sects. ii. and iv., forbids this.‖

When may the name of a Minister be removed from the roll?

"The name of every Minister receiving a certificate

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 154. † *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 82.

‡ *Ibid., 1878*, p. 103.

§ *Book of Discipline*, ch. x., sect. iv.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 169; *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 613. See p. 214.

‖ *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 550.

of dismission shall be retained on the roll of the Presbytery dismissing him until notice of his reception be received from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery receiving him."* His name cannot be removed at his own request because he is about to unite with some other denomination not in correspondence with the Assembly, nor because he has changed his doctrinal belief, nor because he wishes to retire from the work of the ministry. Nor can a name be dropped without notice or citation.†

May a Presbytery refuse to grant a letter of dismissal?

A Minister can be dismissed only as in good standing. If chargeable with heresy or crime, he can be tried only by his own Presbytery.‡ If, therefore, he be under charges or sentence, or has been deposed from the ministry, the Presbytery may refuse to dismiss him or to remove the sentence on his plea of penitence.§

May a Minister demit his office?

The ministry cannot be laid aside at pleasure, nor at the request of the Minister pleading ill-health or unfitness. Nor can the Presbytery deprive any of his office save by a regular course of discipline. The Church before the division, both branches (the O. S. and N. S.) and the reunited Church, have refused to allow the demission of the ministry.‖ Though providentially incapacitated, his rights as a Minister remain (as to presbyterial oversight and judgment, a seat and vote in the church courts, etc.) until he be deposed after regular trial. He may hold the office of Chaplain in the army or navy, or even a civil office, or engage in worldly business, subject

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 82.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 169; *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 511.

‡ See p. 204. § *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 511. See p. 204

‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 165–168.

to the judgment of Presbytery, which should inquire frequently for his reasons for so doing, and record them with approval or disapproval.* In 1880 the Assembly received another overture on this subject, and referred it to the Committee on the Revision of the "Form of Government" and "Book of Discipline."† The Southern Church directs that "a Minister of the gospel against whom there are no charges, if fully satisfied in his own conscience that God has not called him to the ministry, or if he has satisfactory evidence of his inability to serve the Church with acceptance, may report these facts at a stated meeting. At the next stated meeting, if after full deliberation the Presbytery shall concur with him in judgment, it may divest him of his office without censure, and shall assign him membership in some particular church."‡

What action must be taken in regard to those who withdraw from the ministry?

If the Presbytery be not satisfied with their reasons, they should be called to answer charges, unless they can be recalled to a sense of their duty.§

What action must be taken in regard to absentees from Presbytery?

If their residence be unknown, their names must be retained until some knowledge of them can be procured. If they refuse to answer the communications of Presbytery, they must be disciplined.‖

What should Presbytery do for unemployed Ministers?

(1) Provide as far as possible for each permanent or

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 161–164; *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 515.
† *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 84.
‡ *Book of Church Order*, Part II., ch. xii., sect. iii.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 161.
‖ *Minutes G. A. 1876*, pp. 79, 80.

occasional employment; (2) report their names to the Synodical Committee.* Those who are honorably retired (H. R.) retain all the functions of the ministry. This designation "does not affect in any way the status of the Minister or deprive him of any of the functions of his office."†

In 1873 the Board of Home Missions was instructed to organize a special bureau for unemployed Ministers and vacant congregations, whose duty shall be to gather and publish statistics, and to consider such cases of vacant churches and unemployed Ministers as are reported by Synodical Committees, and to endeavor to adjust and distribute these so that every capable Minister applying may have something to do, and every church may be supplied, but so as not in any wise to interfere with presbyterial prerogatives.‡ This bureau has often been commended for its work, and Synods and Presbyteries have been urged to co-operate with it.§ The plan is fully described in the report of Home Missions in 1877, but declared to be a failure, as unemployed Ministers made few applications to it, and Presbyteries and Synods have given very little attention to the subject.‖ In 1880 a special committee of five was appointed "to report some plan to alleviate or remove, if possible, these evils," to the next Assembly.¶ This committee brought in an able and valuable report, and designated three causes of the evils complained of: (1) "The want of an adequate support for the ministry;" (2) "a lack of consecration on the part of the ministry to its work;" and (3) "a want of system in

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 176. † *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 507.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1873*, p. 563.
§ *Minutes 1874*, p. 39; *1875*, p. 488; *1876*, p. 143.
‖ *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 636. ¶ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 46.

bringing those who are able and willing to work, and vacant churches, together;" and proposed the following rules, which were adopted:

"1. Each Presbytery shall, at its semi-annual meeting, prepare a list of its vacant churches, and unemployed Ministers who are competent for service, and who have not been relieved from the active work of the ministry. From this list shall be excepted such vacant churches as have obtained leave from the Presbytery to supply themselves, and such unemployed Ministers as have obtained permission to labor outside the bounds of the Presbytery. The Presbytery shall also require of each of the churches on the list so prepared a report as to the amount it is able to contribute for the support of the preaching of the gospel during the ensuing six months, to the end that the Presbytery or its committee may determine the number of appointments to be made for it from the list of supplies. The Presbytery shall also determine the amount to be paid per week for pulpit supplies in said churches.

"2. The Committee on Home Missions in each Presbytery (or such other committee as the Presbytery may appoint for this duty) shall have supervision of all vacant churches in the interim of the Presbytery; and it shall be its duty to arrange for their supply from the list of unemployed Ministers. It shall send such Ministers to the vacant churches or mission-fields, in such order and rotation as may seem to it best; provided, however, that no Minister shall occupy one pulpit longer than two Sabbaths in succession in the rotation.

"3. If additional pecuniary support is, in the judgment of the Presbytery, needed to supply the vacant churches with stated preaching of the word, the Pres-

bytery may set apart a portion of its home missionary contributions for this purpose. But such part of its contributions shall be sent through the Board of Home Missions, which Board shall acknowledge it in its receipts. Appendix, p. 523.

"4. Should any church, in the interim, be prepared to call a Pastor or make provision for a Stated Supply, its name shall be removed from the list of vacant churches.

"5. In Synods having a synodical Missionary it shall be his duty to communicate with the several presbyterial committees as to the vacant churches and unemployed Ministers under their care and direction; and they shall co-operate with him in the work of organizing new fields and supplying those already in existence.

"6. All unemployed Ministers, able for service, who refuse to be placed on the list and work under the direction of the Presbytery, shall, if not excused, be retired, and so reported to the Assembly.

"7. If in the judgment of the Presbyteries it shall be thought best to make a more general arrangement between the unemployed Ministers and vacant churches within the bounds of the Synod, then the Synodical Committee shall take the place of the Presbyterial, and the duties assigned to the latter shall attach to the former, under such specific instructions as may seem best to each Synod.

"8. All in the act of the Assembly of 1873 concerning the vacant churches and unemployed Ministers, inconsistent with this act, is hereby repealed."

The Board of Publication was instructed to print these rules and send them to the Stated Clerks of the Presbyteries.*

* *Minutes G. A. 1881,* pp. 544–548.

What should be done with vacant churches?

(1) A Moderator should be appointed over their Session;* (2) provision should be made for permanent or occasional preaching; (3) the smaller vacant churches should be grouped together, and a Minister supported as far as possible by them; (4) they should receive special care and oversight; (5) effort should be made to bring vacant churches and unemployed Ministers together.†

May a Minister withdraw from the Presbytery?

This is sometimes done to unite with some other denomination.‡ Though such conduct be disorderly, the Assembly recommended that nothing in the case be done save the striking his name from the roll. When he gives formal notice that he renounces the fellowship of the Presbyterian Church and neglects to attend its courts, he should be dealt with for such neglect, and his name struck from the roll; the fact should be communicated to him, and if necessary published to the Church.§ The congregation of which he was Pastor remains under the care of the Presbytery, and cannot withdraw without its consent. If, however, the congregation give evidence of its intention to withdraw, and decline its further jurisdiction, the Presbytery may then drop the name of the church from its roll. But in all cases, with or without the approval of that body, only the ecclesiastical relation is terminated; "the questions of property must be determined by the courts of the State."|| If a Minister who has thus withdrawn from the Presbytery afterward desire to return, he must make application to the same Presbytery

* *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. iv.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 176; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 56. See p. 210.

‡ See p. 208.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 169; *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 511; *1879*, p. 613. || *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 172; *Minutes G. A. 1876*, p. 80.

from which he withdrew, which shall take such action as it may deem best.*

May a suspended Minister's name be dropped from the roll without process?

It cannot be dropped. The O. S. Assembly declared in 1847 that the name of a suspended Minister must be retained until the Presbytery proceed to the higher censure of deposition.† Appendix, p. 524.

What is judicial process?

The formal trial of charges, in which case it shall be the duty of the Moderator solemnly to announce from the chair "that the body is about to pass to the consideration of the business assigned for trial, and to enjoin on the members to recollect and regard their high character as judges of a court of Jesus Christ and the solemn duty in which they are about to act."‡ Trial before Presbytery may be (1) of Elders, when the only Elder or Elders of a church be accused, or when the Session deem it inexpedient to proceed with the trial, and formally refer the case to the Presbytery.§ (2) Of Ministers, who are primarily responsible to Presbytery.‖ "Process against a gospel Minister shall always be before the Presbytery of which he is a member," even when he does not reside within its bounds. Testimony may by request be taken by another Presbytery, notice being given to the accused of time and place.¶

By whom may charges be presented?

"Process against a gospel Minister shall not be commenced unless some person or persons undertake to make

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 160.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 160.

‡ *General Rules for Judicatories*, xl.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 118; *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. ii.

‖ See p. 204.

¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 517–520.

out the charge, or unless common fame so loudly proclaims the scandal that the Presbytery find it necessary for the honor of religion to investigate the charge." He should be warned privately of his fault before any charges are presented. (1) Common fame may be the accuser.* This was recognized by the O. S. Assembly in 1866.† (2) Any Minister or person may table the charges. Before doing so, he "should apply to some other Bishop of the Presbytery for his advice in the case." He shall be warned that "if he fail to prove the charges he must himself be censured as a slanderer of the gospel ministry, in proportion to the malignancy or rashness that shall appear in the prosecution."‡ (3) The Presbytery must proceed against a Minister on notice from another Presbytery that there are probable grounds for accusation within that Presbytery and unknown to that to which he belongs.§ (4) A Minister may demand a trial whenever he deems that his Christian and ministerial character needs vindication.‖ Pending the trial the Presbytery may suspend him from the exercise of his ministry, and even from the communion. In 1866 the O. S. Assembly suspended certain commissioners from the court until it decided upon the conduct of their Presbytery.¶

How is the trial to be conducted?

According to chs. iv., v. and vi. of the "Book of Discipline."**

What charges may be brought against a Minister?

Charges may concern the personal character, as incon-

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. v., sect. v.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 521; *Book of Church Order*, ch. v. sect. iii.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, ch. v., sects. vi., vii. § *Ibid.*, sect. iv.

‖ *Ibid.*, sect. i.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 521.

¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 524, 525. ** *Ibid.*, pp. 500–532.

sistency in his Christian life; or his official character, as heresy, schism or violation of his ordination vows. The charges must be serious, definite, in writing, and a copy, with the names of witnesses to be summoned, must be given to the accused at least ten days before the trial.*

May the Minister have counsel?

He may call upon any Minister or Elder belonging to the Presbytery to act as his counsel, or he may plead his own cause.†

May the forms of process be dispensed with?

The Assembly, before the separation, and in the O. S. and N. S. divisions, has frequently declared that the process cannot be dispensed with; no censure can be inflicted without trial, or even renewed without a new trial.‡ In accordance with this, the N. S. Assembly in 1866 decided that confession of guilt might shorten, but could not dispense with, the judicial process or trial.§ The O. S. Assembly seems to have made no such utterance, but has acted upon the principle.|| The "Book of Discipline," ch. v., sect. x., reads: "The charges shall be read to him" (the Minister), "and he shall be called upon to say whether he is guilty or not. If he confess, and the matter be base and flagitious, such as drunkenness, uncleanness or crimes of a higher nature, however penitent he may appear to the satisfaction of all, the Presbytery must without delay suspend him from the exercise of his office or depose him from the ministry." This has been generally understood to mean, in accordance with the above decisions, that such sentence must be

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. v., sects. i., vi., viii., x., xiii.

† *Ibid.*, ch. iv., sect. xxi.; ch. v., sect. ii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 514.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 494, 501, 502, 511, 524, 572, 581.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 505. || See p. 155.

passed upon him after the trial; which process may be shortened because of his confession. In 1879, however, the Assembly decided that if the accused person confess guilt and willful persistence in sin, privately and before the judicatory, the court "may proceed to pass sentence without further process of trial."* The Southern Church orders that "when any person shall come forward and make his offence known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded, and judgment rendered without process."†

May the Presbytery try by commission?

In the early history of our Church this was frequently done, and there seems to have been no question raised as to the right of the Presbyteries to appoint commissions for this purpose. The practice, however, passed away, and for years trials were always held before the Presbytery itself. The reason appears to have been that the Minister had a right to the judgment of the whole court in the original trial and in appeal cases. In 1846 the constitutionality of appointing judicial commissions was disputed in the O. S. Assembly, and the matter was referred to a committee, which reported that, "in view of the original rights of our judicatories, of the long-continued practice of the Church, and of the great value of the right, on due occasions, of acting by commissions, the hope is respectfully expressed that the Assembly may do nothing which may have the effect of calling that right in question." The motion denying the right was indefinitely postponed.‡ The O. S. and N. S. Assemblies occasionally appointed judicial commissions to try appeals

* *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 613.

† *Book of Church Order*, Part II., ch. xii., sect. i.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 244.

and complaints, with consent of parties. If these objected, their right to be heard by the whole court was not denied.* At the reunion the Assembly was found to be too large and overtasked to attend properly to judicial business, and therefore the practice of hearing appeals by commissions, with consent of parties, has become general. The Synods and Presbyteries are following the example of the highest court, guarding, however, the right of parties to be heard by the whole court if they so desire. In 1880 the Assembly recognized this as lawful by saying, "that [as] the case was tried by commission by consent of parties, we do not see that it furnishes any just ground of complaint."†

What sentences may be passed on the guilty?

The sentence should be according to the nature as well as the degree of his offence. If he be convicted of official unfitness or unfaithfulness, the Presbytery should "admonish, suspend or depose him according to the nature of the offence." If his offence be personal immorality, he should be suspended or deposed from the ministry, and also "admonished or rebuked, or excluded from church privileges, as the case shall appear to deserve, until he give satisfactory evidence of repentance," or excommunicated if a gross offender.‡ Suspension from office and deposition are to be distinguished from suspension from communion and excommunication. The former does not necessarily include the latter. A man may be unfit for office and yet be a worthy Christian. Unfaithfulness in duty does not always involve immor-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 564, 565; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 244, note.

† *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 65.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv., sects. xvii. and xx.; ch. v., sects. x., xii., xiii.

ality. If both censures are intended by the Presbytery, they must be expressly mentioned in the sentence passed. So the O. S. Assembly decided in 1848.* The sentence should be published, especially if the deposed Minister attempt to exercise any ministerial function, "that the churches may guard themselves against such dangerous impositions."*

May a deposed Minister be restored?

It is unconstitutional for any Presbytery to receive or restore a member of another Presbytery who has been deposed. Application for restoration must always be made to the court which inflicted the sentence.† If suspended from the communion, his restoration to the privileges of the Church does not restore him to office.‡ He should not be restored to the ministry, "even on the deepest sorrow for his sin, until after some time of eminent and exemplary, humble and edifying conversation, to heal the wound made by his scandal. And he ought in no case to be restored until it shall appear that the sentiments of the religious public are strongly in his favor and demand his restoration." Great caution should be exercised.§ Restoration to the ministry does not reinstate as Pastor. Appendix, p. 521.

What is the standing of a suspended Minister?

He cannot exercise any of the functions of the ministry, but he is still a Minister, as an Elder is an Elder even when he ceases by his own act, by removal or by the advice of the Presbytery, to exercise his office.‖ "He ought by no means to be considered as occupying the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 161, 527.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 159, 526. ‡ See p. 59.
§ *Book of Discipline*, ch. v., sect. xvi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 526.
‖ See p. 58.

ground of a common Christian in good standing." He is not a member of a particular church, but is under the care of, and subject to, Presbytery.*

May a Minister who has been received by a Presbytery be deposed by another denomination?

After his reception by a Presbytery the denomination from which he came has no jurisdiction over him, and therefore cannot depose him nor impair his good standing.†

What is the fourth power of Presbytery.

"*To examine and approve or censure the records of church Sessions.*"

How often must this examination be made?

"At least once a year."‡ "If any lower judicatory shall omit to send up its records for this purpose, the higher may issue an order to produce them either immediately or at a particular time, as circumstances may require."§ Appendix, p. 522.

What is the object of this examination?

To ascertain, "First, whether the proceedings have been constitutional and regular; secondly, whether they have been wise, equitable and for the edification of the Church; thirdly, whether they have been correctly recorded."§

What is the effect of approval?

It confirms the action of the Session. The record cannot afterward be changed save by the Presbytery. An error can be corrected only by the highest court which has endorsed the mistake.‖ "The right of appeal, either from a part of the proceedings of a judicatory or from a

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 528. † *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 64.
‡ *Form of Government*, ch. ix., sect. viii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 170.
§ *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. i., sub-sects. i. and ii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 534, 535. ‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 535.

definite sentence, . . . cannot be in any way affected by the approval of the minutes of the judicatory against the action of which the appeal or complaint may be taken." *

What is the effect of disapproval?

The exceptions are to be carefully noted in the Session-book and in the minutes of the Presbytery.† The Session may be required to review and correct its proceedings. But no judicial decision shall be reversed unless by complaint or appeal. If anything be found very injurious, the Session "may be required to review or correct its proceedings." †

May members of Session vote on their own records?

Members of a court cannot vote on the approval of their own record by a superior court.‡

May copies of the sessional record be accepted for review?

In 1790 attested copies were declared allowable when it was found inconvenient to send the books; but in 1841 the O. S. Assembly rescinded this permission, and in 1847 the same body required the production of the records themselves. In 1871, however, the Assembly accepted a translated copy of the Synod of China.‡ In 1878 a printed English translation of the Synod of India was approved, while the records of the Synod of Atlantic were censured for containing pages of printed matter setting forth the acts of Synod, and were required to write the record and present it next year for approval.§

May a restored Minister demand that the records of his case be closed to inspection?

"The records of our church courts are public and not

* *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 613. See p. 185.

† *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 593; *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. i., sub-sects. iii., iv.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 540.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 536. § *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 52.

private documents, and therefore no one who has been under discipline can demand that anything pertaining to his case shall be closed to inspection or transcript. Yet a wise Christian charity would suggest that when the end of discipline in the restoration of an offender has been reached, no further publicity, if possible, should be given to the matter." *

What is the fifth power of Presbytery?

"*To resolve questions of doctrine or discipline seriously and reasonably proposed.*" It cannot change the forms of doctrine or of discipline, but it can declare the meaning and application of the standards of our Church in reply to overtures from the Session. These deliverances, however, are binding only over the churches under the care of that Presbytery, and may be reversed by the higher courts on review or on complaint. The Presbytery may also assent to or dissent from any change in the standards contained in overtures sent down by the General Assembly. A majority of the Presbyteries is necessary for the adoption of such proposed changes.†

What is the sixth power of Presbytery?

"*To condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the Church.*" This power is subject to the same limitations as the preceding.

What is the seventh power of Presbytery?

"*To visit particular churches, for the purpose of inquiring into their state, and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them.*" This may be done (1) on the petition of the Session or of any person or persons in the church; (2) or without any such request, the Presbytery having

* *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 586.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xii., sect. vi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 325–330. See p 273.

reason to believe that there may be evils that need its influence to redress; or (3) in the exercise of its duty of oversight of the churches. This visitation may be made by the Presbytery as a body, by a commission or by a committee. The evils are to be removed by the Presbytery through the Session, to which body the members of the church are primarily responsible.* An Elder may be, by advice of Presbytery, with or without his consent, retired from the active duties of his office.† If the visit is by a committee, the power of the committee depends upon the will of the Presbytery.

What is the eighth power of Presbytery?

"*To unite or divide congregations at the request of the people, to form or receive new congregations, and in general to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care.*"

Has a Minister power to organize churches?

He has in frontier settlements,‡ and where application to Presbytery would be exceedingly inconvenient. In all other cases it is the prerogative of Presbytery.§

When may Presbytery organize a church?

(1) On the petition of persons residing where, in the judgment of Presbytery, a church is needed, a mission station may be opened by a Session or Presbytery; (2) on the petition (even of a minority) of an existing church, asking for a division and new organization. The petition may be denied, but no church can be divided without a request from the people.§

May the Presbytery dissolve a church?

Yes, even against the wishes of a majority of its mem-

* See p. 130. † See pp. 58, 292; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 170, 349 350. ‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. xv.

§ See p. 31; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 107, 173, 174.

bers. This was so decided by the General Assembly (O. S.) 1863, and reaffirmed by the Assembly 1875.* The church must receive due notice of the proposed action, and have an opportunity to be heard, otherwise the Presbytery has no jurisdiction in the case.† In 1878 and 1879 the Assembly declared that the Presbytery "must be its own judge as to the causes that are sufficient to justify it in dissolving any church in its connection;" and "if any wrong is done to a church by such a presbyterial act, its remedy is to be found in an appeal to a higher judicatory."‡

May a church withdraw from Presbytery?

Not without the consent of Presbytery. The questions concerning property must be determined by the laws of the State.§

May Presbytery receive and dismiss churches?

The bounds of Presbyteries are determined by the Synod. If, therefore, it is desirable to change the presbyterial connection of a church, application must be made to the Synod. If the Presbyteries belong to different Synods, the General Assembly determines the transfer.‖ The courts interested should be always officially consulted.

If a church desires to be received from another denomination, formal application should be made to Presbytery, with, if possible, a record of the approbation of the denomination from which it comes. The church, as an ecclesiastical body, may be received; all questions of property must be settled by the courts. The same

* *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 507; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 172.

† *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 544. ‡ *Ibid.*, *1878*, p. 41; *1879*, p. 615.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 172, reaffirmed by General Assembly 1876, p. 80. See p. 214. ‖ *Ibid.*, pp. 175, 187.

rule must be observed in receiving as in dismissing a church.*

May the Presbytery dissolve the pastoral relation?

It alone has power to do so. It may be done (1) at the request of the pastor, (2) or of the congregation, (3) even of a minority, (4) or at the discretion of the Presbytery.†

IX. What record shall the Presbytery keep?

"*A full and fair record of their proceedings,*" which must include a narrative of the state of religion and all other papers.‡ This record must be sent every year to Synod for approval, together with a report of "*licensures, ordinations, the receiving or dismissing of members, the removal of members by death, the union and division of congregations, or the formation of new ones; and in general all the important changes which may have taken place within their bounds in the course of the year.*" A report must also be made every year to the General Assembly, containing (1) "a statistical report," according to a prepared form; (2) "a narrative of the state of religion within the bounds of the Presbytery for the year ending April 1st." This should be very full, according to directions given in 1872.‡ In 1880 the Stated Clerk was "directed to prepare and send out annually to the Stated Clerks of the Presbyteries such blanks for tabulated statements of facts as may enable the Assembly's Standing Committee on the Narrative to make their report more effective and accurate."§ Appendix, pp. 524, 525.

X. What meetings shall the Presbytery hold?

"*It shall meet at its own adjournment.*" It is usual to

* See p. 214. *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 65.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xvii.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 174, 419. See pp. 203 and 371–381. ‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 177, 178.

§ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 78.

have stated meetings; the number of these is determined by the necessities of the case. Most Presbyteries hold two stated meetings. The larger, and especially city, Presbyteries meet more frequently, sometimes once a month. Some have intermediate meetings, which are short meetings intended to prevent the undue accumulation of business at the stated meetings and the frequency of extra or *pro re nata* meetings. These stated and intermediate meetings have set times, to which the Presbytery adjourns.

What is a "pro re nata" meeting?

It is a special meeting. "*When any emergency shall require a meeting sooner than the time to which it stands adjourned, the Moderator, or, in case of his absence, death or inability to act, the Stated Clerk, shall, with the concurrence or at the request of two Ministers and two Elders, the Elders being of different congregations, call a special meeting. For this purpose he shall send a circular letter, specifying the particular business of the intended meeting, to every Minister belonging to the Presbytery and to the Session of every vacant congregation, in due time previous to the meeting, which shall not be less than ten days. And nothing shall be transacted at such special meeting besides the particular business for which the judicatory has been thus convened.*" The Moderator calling the meeting must be one chosen at a stated meeting. So the O. S. Assembly decided in 1842, and in 1856 that applicants for a *pro re nata* meeting may specify the time and place, which the Moderator cannot change.* "Only such action should be had at a *pro re nata* meeting as is essential to complete the business directly connected with that named in the call for said meeting."†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 179. † *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 81.

When may "pro re nata" meetings be called?

They may be called "on account of important occurrences unknown at their last meeting, and which cannot be safely deferred till their stated meeting." Deferred judicial business is not proper for such meetings, except when it appears that "some principal things upon which the judgment depends may be then had, and cannot be obtained if it is deferred till the stated meeting."*

What is an adjourned meeting?

It is a continuation of a meeting of Presbytery. It may be at another place, and after days, weeks or even months have passed, but the time and place must be provided for before the adjournment. No call or notice or circular letter is necessary, unless required by a special resolution. The object of an adjourned meeting is to complete the business before Presbytery. This becomes necessary when (1) the members must return home before finishing the docket; (2) when some other time or place is more convenient; (3) when it is more orderly that part of the business should be performed elsewhere, as ordination before the congregation; (4) when better results may be obtained, as in judicial cases the court may be more undisturbed and have better access to witnesses and documents, etc.

Who may be members of an adjourned meeting?

Elders appointed to be delegates to a meeting of Presbytery should retain their seats to the end. It is not lawful for them to leave and their alternates to take their places; this is specially illegal in judicial cases. Such was the decision of the Assembly in 1827, and it is applicable to an adjourned meeting, which is but the continuation of a meeting. In 1872, however, in direct

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 179.

variance with this, the Assembly declared that a Session might send a different Elder to an adjourned meeting.* In 1878 it decided that an Elder appointed to represent the Session at Synod was not, by virtue of that appointment, also its representative at any adjourned meeting of his Presbytery held during the intervals of the sessions of Synod; yet each Session may "prescribe the particular terms for which, or times at which, its delegates shall attend as its representatives in such judicatories."† Some Sessions appoint a delegate to serve at any meetings which may be held within six months.‡

May the Synod order the Presbytery to meet?

Yes, according to the decision of the O. S. Assembly in 1848, specifying the time, place and business to be transacted. In such cases the rules for the calling of a *pro re nata* meeting must be observed, except when the Synod desires, while in session, the action of Presbytery "on business immediately connected with the proceedings of that body; in such cases the Presbytery may be required to meet at once by order of the Synod."§

Where may the Presbytery meet?

(1) Within its own bounds—sometimes in a church or hall selected by the Presbytery for its meetings, but more generally in the different churches on their invitation. (2) Without its bounds, by order of the Synod—as during the meeting of Synod, or by its own order, to suit the convenience of its members.§

XI. How is the Presbytery to be opened?

"*At every meeting of Presbytery a sermon shall be delivered, if convenient; and every particular session shall be opened and closed with prayer.*" The preacher should

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 131.
† *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 69.
‡ See p. 178.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 178.

be the Moderator, or in his absence the last Moderator present; yet in 1849 the O. S. Assembly said that no principle of the constitution was violated by inviting a member of another Presbytery to preach.* "*Every particular session*" is generally understood to mean each day's session, during which recess may be taken for meals or other purposes.

May the Presbytery sit with closed doors?

"All judicatories have a right to sit in private on business which in their judgment ought not to be matter of public speculation." † In 1880 the Assembly "recommended to its subordinate judicatories that before entering upon judicial process they carefully determine what degree of privacy or publicity in the proceedings would be most conducive to the ends of justice, the peace of the Church and the spiritual benefit of the person tried." ‡

How is the Presbytery to be closed?

"*Every particular session shall be closed with prayer,*" and a record of the fact must be made. At the final adjournment the Moderator, "in addition to prayer, may cause to be sung an appropriate psalm or hymn, and shall pronounce the apostolical benediction." § The Moderator should then state that the Presbytery stands adjourned to meet at ——— on the —— day of ——, A. D. ——.

XII. Who may be invited to sit as corresponding members?

"*Ministers in good standing in other Presbyteries or in sister churches, who may happen to be present, may be invited to sit with the Presbytery as corresponding members. Such members shall be entitled to deliberate and advise, but*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 179; *Form of Government*, ch. xii., sect. vii.

† *General Rules for Judicatories*, xxxviii. See p. 496.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 23.

§ *General Rules for Judicatories*, xliii. See p. 497.

not to vote in any decision of the Presbytery." Their names and their ecclesiastical relation must be recorded.* The N. S. Assembly in 1843 recommended that no Minister should be so invited who does not belong to some body in correspondence with the Assembly; and in 1849 it unanimously decided that it was orderly to invite Ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church to sit as corresponding members in Presbytery and Synod.* The O. S. Assembly seems to have taken no such action, but the usage has been in accordance with the above.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE SYNOD.

I. What is the Synod?

"*As a Presbytery is a convention of the Bishops and Elders within a certain district, so a Synod is a convention of the Bishops and Elders within a larger district, including at least three Presbyteries.*"† The Synod is therefore a larger Presbytery. Its original title was "The Presbytery." It was recognized as possessing the powers of the subordinate Presbyteries and of supreme jurisdiction, "unlimited by written constitution and uncontrolled by a superior." Its appropriate title was "The General Presbytery." The first Synod was organized in 1717 by the three Presbyteries, which then included all the churches of the denomination. In 1725 the Synod was asked if it might be composed of delegates from the Presbyteries, and replied in the affirmative. It was voted "that the Presbytery of New Castle and Phila-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 180. † *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 73.

delphia do yearly delegate the half of their members to the Synod, and the Presbytery of Long Island two of their number." And it was further ordered "that all the members of the Synod do attend every third year; and that if in the interim anything of moment occur, whereby the presence of all the members may be thought necessary, they (upon notice given by the commission of Synod) shall carefully attend, notwithstanding the above delegation. And it is further agreed that every member of the Synod may attend as formerly, if they see cause." After some time the plan silently fell into disuse.* "The 'Form of Government,' as adopted in 1789, reads: 'As a Presbytery, etc., so a Synod is the convention of several Presbyteries within a larger district, including at least three Presbyteries.' The Assembly of 1804 sent down an overture to the Presbyteries to change the section, so as to read as at present (1873), and adds in a note: 'Under this section it has been doubted whether the members can proceed to business as a Synod unless there are present several Presbyteries—*i. e.* at least three Ministers from one of the existing Presbyteries and three from another. The doubt has not only caused delay in several instances, but defeated the whole business of one entire meeting. The amendment therefore goes to make a Synod consist not of Presbyteries, but, as it ought, of Bishops and Elders.' The amendment was adopted (1805, p. 333)."† In 1880 the Assembly transmitted to the Presbyteries the following overture, which, being approved by them, was, in 1881, adopted as part of the constitution: "*The Synod may be composed at its own option, with the consent of a majority of its Presbyteries, either of all the Bishops and one Elder from each congregation in its*

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 277. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 181.

*district, with the same modifications as in the Presbytery, or of equal delegations of Bishops and Elders, elected by the Presbyteries on a basis and in a ratio determined in like manner by the Synod itself and its Presbyteries."** This, together with the adoption of another overture,† makes a decided change in our constitution. The first clause of this section still declares the Synod to be a larger Presbytery, composed of Bishops and delegates from Sessions. The remainder of the section permits and encourages the Synods to become provincial Assemblies, whose boundaries shall correspond with those of the several States, and whose members shall be delegates of Presbyteries which were not represented as such in Synod. The uniformity of our church courts will be lost, some Synods remaining larger Presbyteries, and others becoming provincial Assemblies. App., pp. 525, 528.

How are Synods formed?

Synods are formed and their bounds determined by the General Assembly. In 1788 the original Synod divided itself in four—viz.: (1) of New York and New Jersey, (2) of Philadelphia, (3) of Virginia, and (4) of the Carolinas. The next year the General Assembly was formed as the highest court of the Church, according to the act passed in 1786.‡ After this the formation of new Synods and changes in the boundaries of Synods were effected only by the General Assembly on the petition or with the consent of the Synods interested in the changes.§ In 1870, at the reunion of the Old and New School bodies, there were fifty-one Synods. These were by the General Assembly reorganized as thirty-four

* *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 73; *1881*, pp. 522–524.

† See p. 239.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 278–280.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 265–275; *New Digest*, pp. 142–154.

Synods, their boundaries determined and the first place of meeting of each ordered. Some changes have been since made in the boundaries, and new Synods have been formed by the Assembly, the Synods and Presbyteries interested having been consulted.* There were in 1880 thirty-eight Synods.† In 1879 a committee was appointed to report to the Assembly "on the propriety of the proposed changes," "looking toward the reorganization of the Synods of the Church." In 1880 the committee was continued, with instructions to report their plan anew in case of the adoption of the overture permitting Synods to be delegate bodies. The plan was, that "the boundaries of each Synod shall be made, unless obviously impracticable, conterminous with the boundaries of the State." This plan was adopted in 1881. Twelve of the Synods covered entire States, three extended over parts of several States, two were in foreign lands, and the rest, twenty-one in number, were in six States—New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa. These twenty-one were consolidated into six Synods. The Synod of New York shall comprise all the Presbyteries in that State and the churches in the New England States and the foreign Presbyteries of Oroomiah and Siam. The Synod of Pennsylvania, the Presbyteries in that State and in the State of West Virginia and in Western Africa. The other Synods, of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa, shall include all within those States. An enabling act was also passed, the plan and action to take effect on the second day of January, 1882, and these new Synods were required to meet in October, 1882, at places,

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 182–188; *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 82; *1875*, pp. 492, 505, 507; *1878*, p. 57, etc.

† *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 461.

and to be opened with sermons by Ministers, chosen by the Assembly.* Appendix, p. 526.

Can a Synod refuse to receive any member of one of its Presbyteries?

Ministers are primarily responsible to their Presbyteries. The Synod must receive all who are reported by the Presbyteries to be members in good standing. It has no power to order the lower courts to erase names from their rolls.†

What is the ratio of the representation of Elders in Synod?

The same as in the Presbytery. Or, "*of equal delegations of Bishops and Elders, . . . in a ratio determined . . . by the Synod itself and its Presbyteries.*"

II. What constitutes a quorum?

"*Any seven Ministers belonging to the Synod, who shall convene at the time and place of meeting, with as many Elders as may be present, shall be a quorum to transact synodical business; provided not more than three of the said Ministers belong to the same Presbytery.*" If less than a quorum attempt to perform business, or if more than three Ministers, forming the quorum, be from the same Presbytery, the proceedings are invalid, except as to the appointment of the time and place of the next meeting. The Synod, however, may at its next meeting review the acts of these members, and adopt or reject them as it may deem best.§

Is it necessary that any Elders should be present?

Judging from the decisions of the General Assembly in regard to the quorum of Presbyteries,‖ seven Minis-

* *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 61; *1880*, p. 78; *1881*, pp. 559–565.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 181, 182.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch x., sects. ii., iii., iv., v. See pp. 178, 180–182, 232. § *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 189. ‖ See p. 182.

ters would form a quorum of Synod. The Southern Presbyterian Church says: "Any seven Ministers belonging to it (the Synod) who shall convene at the time or place of meeting, with at least three Ruling Elders, shall be a quorum; provided not more than three of the said Ministers belong to one Presbytery."*

May the Synod hold a meeting on the Sabbath?

Synods have been censured for so doing, even when very little business was transacted.†

If there be no quorum present at the time and place appointed, what may be done?

"Any two members shall be competent to adjourn from time to time, that an opportunity may be given for a quorum to assemble."‡ Less than a quorum can transact no business, save to appoint the time and place of the next meeting. So the O. S. Assembly decided in 1856.† Those present may deem it best to attend to certain matters, and their action may be approved and adopted as the act of Synod at its next meeting. §

What is the remedy if the Synod fail to meet at the time and place appointed?

(1) Those who do meet may adjourn to some other time and place.|| (2) "The Moderator ought to be considered competent to call a meeting," "giving due notice by a circular letter to the Moderators of the several Presbyteries." He is "competent to fix any time and place he may judge proper for convening the body. And if he be absent, the members present shall represent the matter

* *Book of Church Order*, ch. v., sect. v., sub-sect. ii.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 189.
‡ *General Rules for Judicatories*, iii. See p. 491.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 189. See pp. 125, 126.
|| See p. 235.

speedily to him, that he may act accordingly."* (3) Or the General Assembly may order the Synod to meet, and may determine the time and place.†

May the time or place of the next meeting of Synod be changed after its adjournment?

It may be done by the General Assembly on a petition of one of the Presbyteries. This was done in 1873 as to the time of meeting. The O. S. Assembly changed the place of the Synod's meeting on petition of a Presbytery in 1842. The Moderator of Synod has no such power.† It sometimes happens, however, that a change as to time or place is necessary, and that the Assembly does not meet, so that the above remedy cannot be applied. In such cases either of the following plans of procedure may be adopted: (1) A quorum may assemble at the time and place appointed and immediately adjourn, as the Moderator may suggest. Notice may be given to the Moderators of the several Presbyteries or to the members of the change, so that the whole body may assemble immediately after the adjournment of the quorum. This may be done, according to the decision of the O. S. Assembly, even by less than a quorum.‡ (2) A *pro re nata* meeting of Synod may be called by the Moderator for the purpose of making the change.§ (3) The Moderator may call the Synod to meet at a different time or place. The Synod may thus meet, hear his reasons for making the change, and, if these be approved, may proceed with its business, reporting to the next General Assembly the facts in the case, petitioning that body to legalize the meeting and to recognize and confirm their actions.‖ Appendix, p. 526.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 189. † *Ibid.*, pp. 190, 191.
‡ See p. 236. § See p. 238. ‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 143.

Can the Moderator call a special meeting?

There is no such special provision in the "Form of Government." But the General Assembly determined (in 1796) that special meetings are constitutional, and confirmed this in 1829 and 1832, and the N. S. Assembly in 1855.* Judging from "Form of Government," ch. x., sects. vii. and x., and the change in the constitution proposed in 1832, it would seem that the Moderator of Synod should call a *pro re nata* meeting at the request of three Ministers and three Elders, and that these Ministers should not be all from the same Presbytery. The notice should be sent to all the Ministers and churches of the Synod. The notice must specify the object of the meeting, and nothing can be done which is not specified in the call.†

Notwithstanding the above decisions recognizing that *pro re nata* meetings of Synod were "in accordance with the constitution of the Presbyterian Church," in 1874 the Assembly disapproved of the Synod of Michigan for holding a *pro re nata* meeting. ‡

III. May corresponding members be received?

"*The same rule as to corresponding members, which was laid down with respect to the Presbytery, shall apply to the Synod.*" They should be introduced as members of ——— Synod, or if belonging to other denominations the name of the ecclesiastical body with which they are connected should be mentioned and recorded. §

IV. What are the powers of Synod?

(1) "*The Synod has power to receive and issue all appeals regularly brought up from the Presbyteries.*"

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 190; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 264.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 190; *Form of Government*, ch. x., sect. x.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 85.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 198. See p. 230.

(2) "*To decide all references made to them.*"

(3) "*To review the records of Presbyteries, and approve or censure them.*"

(4) "*To redress whatever has been done by Presbyteries contrary to order.*"

(5) "*To take effectual care that Presbyteries observe the constitution of the Church.*"

(6) "*To erect new Presbyteries, and unite or divide those which were before erected.*"

(7) "*Generally to take such order with respect to the Presbyteries, Sessions and people under their care as may be in conformity with the word of God and the established rules, and which tend to promote the edification of the Church.*"

(8) "*To propose to the General Assembly for their adoption such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole Church.*"

What effect has the decision of the Synod in appeal cases?

The same as in Presbytery. Its decisions are not advisory, but authoritative. It may be "either to confirm or reverse, in whole or in part, the decision of the inferior judicatory; or to remit the cause for the purpose of amending the record, should it appear incorrect or defective, or for a new trial."* In 1881 this section was changed, making the Synod in certain cases a court of final appeal, "*Its decisions on appeals, complaints and references which do not affect the doctrine or constitution of the Church being final.*"† Appendix, p. 526.

Wherein does the Synod differ from the lower courts?

It is a court of appeal. It has no original jurisdiction, either over Ministers, as the Presbytery has, or

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. iii., sub-sect. x.

† *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 74; *1881*, p. 522.

over the Elders and communicants, as the Session has.* It cannot institute judicial process,† and can consider such only on review, reference or complaint, or appeal from the Presbyteries.‡

May the Synod discipline a member for absence?

The Assembly took exceptions to a resolution of a Synod to make a Minister liable to suspension without trial if absent for three years from its meeting without sending his reasons.§ The Synod has no original jurisdiction over Ministers or Elders. If the members neglect its meetings or fail in their duty, they must be reported to the courts to which they are responsible.‖

What power has the Synod over the Presbyteries?

The power of "review and control" in the annual examination of their records—of deciding on references, appeals and complaints orderly brought from the Presbyteries. The Synod may change the boundaries of the Presbyteries. Those interested should be consulted, yet the Synod has full power to act even when they remonstrate.¶ It may cite Presbyteries that are charged by common fame with neglects, irregularities, disobedience, heretical opinions or corrupt practices. If the wrong be an act of the Presbytery, that court may be censured and ordered to correct the evil. If the wrong be in the churches or Ministers or Elders, the Synod "shall remit the whole matter to the delinquent judicatory, with a direction to take it up and dispose of it in a constitutional manner, or

* *Form of Government*, chs. ix., x., xi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 191, 192. † See p. 242.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 192; *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 199. ‖ See pp. 162, 179.

¶ See p. 178.

to stay all further proceedings in the case, as circumstances may require."*

Can the Synod order a Presbytery to dissolve a pastoral relation?

The Presbytery alone can form or dissolve a pastoral relation.† If the Presbytery refuse to do so, the decision may by complaint be brought before Synod, and be reversed.‡

How are references, appeals and complaints to be considered by Synod?

In the same manner as in Presbytery.§ The Synod cannot order an inferior court to rehear a case already decided when no intimation of additional evidence is given. "Nor in sending back a case can the Synod pass by the Presbytery in which the case has once been adjudicated."‖ All the decisions made by Synod are subject to review by the General Assembly.¶ (Concerning appeals, complaints and references, see p. 184.)

May Synod try an appeal by commission?

It may with consent of parties.** In 1880 the Assembly recognized the right of the Synod to do so.†† The Southern Church makes a distinct provision for trial by commission: "The Synod and the General Assembly may, with consent of parties, commit any case of trial coming before them on appeal to the judgment of a commission, composed of others than members of the court from which the appeal shall come up. The commission of a Synod shall consist of not less than fifteen,

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii., sect. i., sub-sects. v. and vi.; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 541.

† See p. 202.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 193, 420.

§ See p. 188.

‖ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 34.

¶ See p. 244.

** See pp. 190, 218.

†† *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 65.

of whom seven shall be Ruling Elders; the commission of the Assembly, of not less than twenty-seven, of whom thirteen shall be Ruling Elders. In each case two-thirds of the commissioners shall be a quorum to attend to business. The commission shall try the cause in the manner prescribed by the Rules of Discipline, and in rendering judgment shall make a full statement of the case, which shall be submitted to the court for its action as its judgment of the cause."*

What power has the Synod over members of an extinct Presbytery?

Ministers of an extinct Presbytery, while *in transitu*, charged with an offence, may be refused admittance to the Presbytery to which they have been dismissed, and should be if there be no prospect of an impartial and efficient trial; in which case they are under the direction of the Synod.†

What power has the Synod in its relation to the General Assembly?

It may send overtures for the consideration of the Assembly, enforced by the approval of the Synod. Sometimes several Synods agree severally to endorse the same overture. Sometimes one or more Presbyteries ask the Synod to add its approbation to overtures which they have sent to the Assembly. Appendix, p. 527.

What relation has the Synod to the Boards of the Church?

These are the creation of the Assembly, and are accountable to it.‡ In 1880 the Assembly resolved "that the Boards of the Church be directed to make annually, to each of the Synods, detailed reports of their work

* *Book of Church Order*, ch. v., sect. vii., sub-sect. iii.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 152.

‡ See p. 387.

within its bounds; and that each Synod, carefully considering its own condition and wants, be directed to report to the General Assembly any suggestions or propositions with reference to the work of the Boards within its bounds as may seem to it wise; and that these suggestions or propositions be referred by the General Assembly to its Standing Committees respectively."*

V. How often shall the Synod meet?

"*At least once each year.*" Adjourned meetings may be held at the will of the Synod, and *pro re nata* meetings as above described.†

How shall its meeting be opened?

"*At the opening of which a sermon shall be delivered by the Moderator, or in case of his absence by some other member.*" This sermon is deemed necessary. Synods have been reproved by the General Assembly for its omission, and even its postponement "to the following evening."‡

How shall its Sessions be opened?

"*Every particular Session shall be opened and closed with prayer.*" The record must notice the fact.‡ A recess does not imply the close of a Session.§

How shall the Synod close its meeting?

"With singing, prayer and the apostolic benediction."‖

VI. What record shall the Synod keep?

"*It shall be the duty of the Synod to keep a full and fair record of its proceedings.*" This must include the reasons for its decisions. In 1874 the Assembly declared "it is contrary to the spirit and principles of the Presbyterian Church, and subversive of the true design of

* *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 74; Appendix, pp. 527, 539. † See p. 238.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 193. § *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 575.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 193; *General Rules for Judicatories*, xliii.

ecclesiastical discipline, for a superior judicatory to compel an inferior court to reverse its decision, rendered after full, fair and impartial trial, without assigning and placing on record some specific reason for such reversal."* In 1878 the Assembly made exceptions to its approval of the minutes of a Synod because, although the reasons of vote on a complaint were given, "the subject-matter of the said complaint is not recorded. This defect disables the Assembly from deciding as to the validity of the reasons given for the vote of the Synod in the case." "It does not appear from their records whether the Synod took further action upon said complaint than to vote upon it and give reasons for that vote; thereby leaving the Assembly in doubt whether the Presbytery complained of was censured, or whether the matter of the complaint was referred back to them for readjudication, or whether the Synod dropped it entirely."† The O. S. Assembly decided that absentees must be recorded, judicial cases stated, and overtures answered described. The pages must be numbered. The record should show all changes in the Presbyteries and adopted reports, and must be approved by the Synod and attested by the Stated Clerk.‡ Appendix, p. 528.

How often must the records be inspected?

The Synod shall "*submit them annually to the inspection of the General Assembly, and report to the Assembly the numbers of its Presbyteries and of the members and alterations of the Presbyteries.*" The object of this inspection is the same as that of the examination by Presbytery of the records of Session.§ If the records be not presented, the Synod may be reminded by the General

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 86.

† *Ibid., 1878*, p. 60.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 194–199.

§ See p. 167.

Assembly of this neglect of duty, or the Synod may be directed to call their Stated Clerk to account for not having sent their records to the Assembly.*

What other reports must the Synod make?

(1) A report of all the changes in the Presbyteries. (2) A statistical report of the Ministers, churches, Licentiates, Candidates within their bounds, and how distributed, the changes in the number and arrangements of their Presbyteries, the names of the Stated Clerks of the Presbyteries, the place and hour of the next stated meeting, and the name of the Moderator and Stated Clerk of Synod.† (3) A narrative of the state of religion within its bounds. This must be sent to the Assembly and recorded in the minutes of Synod.†

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

I. What is the General Assembly?

It "*is the highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church.*"

In what sense is it the highest judicatory?

It is the highest and final court of appeal. Judicial cases arising in the Session may be rejudged in the Presbytery, and again in the Synod, these bodies representing larger and still larger portions of the Church. When such cases are brought before the General Assembly, which represents the whole Church, they are finally disposed of. Even future Assemblies cannot reverse the decisions thus given.‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 196. † *Ibid.*, p. 199.

‡ *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii. See p. 255.

What does it represent?

"*It shall represent in one body all the particular churches of this denomination.*" These churches, however, are represented by delegates chosen by the Presbyteries to which they belong.*

What is its legal title?

It "*shall bear the title of* THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."

The early Presbyterian churches in this country formed about 1704 "The Presbytery." It claimed jurisdiction "alike unlimited by a written constitution and uncontrolled by a superior." Its proper title was "The General Presbytery." In 1716 it divided itself into four subordinate Presbyteries, and the General Presbytery assumed the title of Synod. In 1788 the Synod divided itself into four Synods, and it was resolved "that out of the body of these Synods a General Assembly shall be constituted, . . . and that the judicatory thus constituted shall bear the style and title of *the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.*"† At the disruption in 1838 each branch claimed that its highest court was the true successor of the General Assembly of 1837, and therefore had the right to this title. The civil courts decided in favor of that branch which was commonly called the Old School.‡ At the reunion in 1869 the old title was retained, and the Assembly of 1870 was declared to be the true successor of the Assemblies of 1869 of the Old and New School churches.§ In 1858 the Southern Synods of the N. S. As-

* See p. 506.

† *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 276–280.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 795–800; *New Digest*, pp. 607–613.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 90–98.

sembly separated themselves from that body, and formed a Church whose highest court was called "*The United Synod of the Presbyterian Church.*" * In 1861 the Southern Synods, in connection with the O. S. Assembly, organized themselves into a separate Church, whose highest judicatory now bears the title of "*The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.*" † The United Synod united with the Southern Assembly in 1864.

What are the radical principles of the Presbyterian Church polity and discipline?

1. "The several different congregations of believers, taken collectively, constitute one Church of Christ, called emphatically the Church."

2. "A larger part of the Church, or a representation of it, should govern a smaller, or determine matters of controversy which arise therein."

3. "In like manner a representation of the whole should govern and determine in regard to every part, and to all the parts united; that is, that a majority shall govern, and consequently that appeals may be carried from lower to higher judicatories till they be finally decided by the collected wisdom and united voice of the whole Church."

"For these principles, and this procedure, the example of the Apostles and the practice of the primitive Church are considered as authority. (See Acts 15 : 1–29, and the proofs adduced under the last three chapters.)" ‡

When was the first General Assembly held?

In 1789, on the third Thursday in May, at 11 A. M., in the Second Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. Usage has fixed the above as the time for the annual meeting. The Assembly met in Philadelphia from 1789 until

* *New Digest*, p. 565. † *Book of Church Order*, ch. v., sect. vi.
‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xii., note. See p. 10.

1843, except five times, and since 1843 it has accepted invitations from year to year, and sometimes has selected a place of meeting without an invitation.* A committee was often appointed to report on invitations or to propose a place of meeting. In 1881 it was resolved that the Moderator and the Stated and Permanent Clerks be appointed a committee to report from year to year on the place of the meeting of the next ensuing Assembly.† The first Assembly was opened with a sermon by Rev. John Witherspoon, D. D., who acted as Moderator until the election of Rev. John Rogers, D. D., after the organization. It consisted of twenty-three Ministers and eleven Elders. "The Presbytery" of 1704 was really a General Assembly.* The first General Assembly in Scotland consisted of six Ministers and thirty-four other persons.‡

II. Of whom shall the General Assembly consist?

"*Of an equal delegation of Bishops and Elders from each Presbytery, in the following proportion: viz., each Presbytery consisting of not more than twenty-four Ministers shall send one Minister and one Elder; and each Presbytery consisting of more than twenty-four Ministers shall send two Ministers and two Elders; and in the like proportion for every twenty-four Ministers in any Presbytery; and these delegates so appointed shall be styled Commissioners to the General Assembly.*"

Has this always been the ratio of representation?

In 1786 it was determined that each Presbytery of not more than six Ministers should send one Minister and one Elder, and those which had more than six and less than twelve should send two Ministers and two Elders. In 1819 the ratio was changed by substituting the words

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 280, 854; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 200. See p. 15. † *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 591. ‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 276.

nine for six, and eighteen for twelve. In 1826 these numbers were changed to twelve and twenty-four. In 1833 the present ratio was adopted.* Since the reunion in 1869 the General Assembly has been so large that a further change seemed necessary. Several propositions have been made, but as yet (1881) no plan has been approved by the Presbyteries.† These plans were (1) to increase the ratio of representation; or (2) to retain the present ratio, but omit from the constituency all Ministers except Pastors and Missionaries; or (3) to require the smaller Presbyteries to be represented alternately each year by a Minister or an Elder, and the other Presbyteries for every twenty Ministers by one commissioner; and when more than one is allowed to a Presbytery, they shall be as nearly as possible equally chosen from the Ministers and Elders; or (4) to substitute synodical for presbyterial representation; or (5) to increase the present ratio to one Minister and Elder for every forty Ministers, and the constituency to be only those actually engaged in ministerial work; or (6) the basis of representation to be the number of Ministers and communicants combined, two delegates to represent every twenty-five hundred. New Presbyteries not to be represented until they shall number five hundred Ministers and communicants.† In 1879 the whole question of reduced representation was indefinitely postponed.‡ In 1881 a change was made in the constitution to relieve the Assembly of part of its work by reducing the number of the Synods, and making them in most cases final courts of appeal.§

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 212.

† *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 522; *1876*, pp. 69, 73; *1877*, pp. 507, 552; *1878*, pp. 39, 63; *1879*, pp. 576, 578; *1880*, p. 73.

‡ *Ibid., 1879*, p. 578. § *Ibid., 1880*, p. 73. See p. 239.

What is the rule concerning corresponding members?

The "Form of Government" makes no provision for them. Prior to 1791 they were occasionally received, but in that year the Assembly declared the practice unauthorized and inexpedient. Since then they have not been received. The New School Assembly in 1858 gave all the privileges of corresponding members to the Secretaries of Permanent Committees and to the Clerk of the Assembly. In the reunited Church in 1870 the Secretaries of the Boards were accorded these privileges "in discussions bearing upon the interest of the Boards which they severally represent."* Delegates from corresponding body are received, but cannot vote. In 1880 the Assembly replied to visitors from the Woman's National Christian Temperance Union, "that friendly delegates or visitors should be received only from corresponding ecclesiastical bodies."† The Committee on Correspondence in 1881 reported "that the Assembly have enacted a rule that the practice of sending delegates to bodies represented in the Presbyterian General Alliance is no longer necessary, and therefore no delegates are nominated to them."‡

What special arrangement was made with the General Association of Connecticut in 1794?

In 1792 it was agreed that the General Assembly and the General Association of Connecticut should each appoint a committee of three members, "who shall have the right to sit in the other's general meeting, and make such communications as shall be directed by their respective constituents, and deliberate on such matters as may come before the body, but have no right to vote." In 1794 it was resolved that these delegates have also the right "to

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 212, 213.

† *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 42. ‡ *Ibid., 1881*, p. 551. See p. 265.

vote on all questions which may be determined by either of them."* In 1804 a similar agreement was ratified with the General Convention of Vermont, in 1810 with the General Association of New Hampshire, in 1811 with the General Association of Massachusetts, in 1828 with the General Conference of Maine (except that the delegates shall not have the right to vote), in 1831 with the Evangelical Consociation of Rhode Island.* In 1827 the General Assembly sent a communication to the Congregational churches of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont, stating that the right to vote given to these delegates was inconsistent with our "Form of Government." The relations and rights of the delegates from the Congregational churches in Connecticut were modified by the Plan of Union adopted in 1802.† Since 1830 delegates from other bodies have not had the right to vote.‡

III. What is a quorum of the General Assembly?

"*Any fourteen or more of these commissioners, one-half of whom shall be Ministers, being met on the day and at the place appointed, shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.*" If a quorum be not present, the commissioners may adjourn from time to time, as in case of less than a quorum of Presbytery and Synod.§ The quorum may, as in Presbytery and Synod, be formed without an Elder.‖ The Southern Church requires to form a quorum "eighteen commissioners, of whom one-half shall be Ministers, and at least five shall be Ruling Elders."¶

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 513, 514; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 268.

† See p. 261. *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 519, 570.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 213.

§ See pp. 183, 236. *General Rules for Judicatories*, iii. See p. 491.

‖ See pp. 182, 235. ¶ *Book of Church Order*, ch. v., sect. vi.

IV. What are the powers of the General Assembly?

"*The General Assembly shall*—

1. "*Receive and issue all appeals, complaints and references that shall affect the doctrine or constitution of the Church, which may be regularly brought before them from the inferior judicatories.*"

2. "*They shall review the records of every Synod, and approve or censure them.*"

3. "*They shall give their advice and instruction in all cases submitted to them in conformity with the constitution of the Church.*"

4. "*They shall constitute the bond of union, peace, correspondence and mutual confidence among all our churches.*"

(For other powers see p. 254.)

How does the General Assembly differ from the lower courts?

1. It represents the whole Church.

2. It is the highest and final court of appeal.

3. It alone can interpret the laws of the Church.

4. It alone can make or change (with consent of the Presbyteries) constitutional laws.

5. It is the bond of union of the churches and the agent of correspondence with other denominations.

6. It superintends the benevolence of the Church.

7. It provides for the increase of the Ministry.

8. It is not a permanent body; it adjourns *sine die*, calling a new Assembly to meet the next year.

Has it any original jurisdiction?

"The Assembly of the Church of Scotland has ever claimed and exercised original jurisdiction, acting as the Presbytery of the whole Church."* In a few cases our

* *Church Polity*, p. 415.

Assembly has cited courts and Ministers. This power was denied by the N. S. Assembly in 1840 and 1856. The O. S. Assembly in 1866 expelled a commissioner for publishing an article severely reflecting upon another member and upon the character of the courts.* See also pp. 256–258.

What appeals, etc. may it receive?

In ordinary cases only those which come from Synods. If, however, the complaint be from one Presbytery against another belonging to another Synod, or in peculiar circumstances, the appeal or complaint may come directly to the General Assembly. But such cases are very rare, and unwillingly entertained.† In 1881 the Synod was made a court of final appeal in some cases,‡ and the clause was added to this section limiting appeals, complaints and references to be brought before the Assembly to those "*that affect the doctrine and constitution of the Church.*"§ Appendix, p. 528.

What is the court of final appeal?

A court whose decisions cannot be reviewed. The Synod in some cases, and the General Assembly in others, are courts of final appeal.‖ It also denotes a new court proposed to the Assembly in 1873. The next year a majority and a minority report were made and referred to the next Assembly. It was reported each year until 1878, when the Assembly appointed a special committee to revise the "Form of Government" and "Book of Discipline," and referred to it these reports on the Court of Final Appeal. In 1880 this committee printed the "Revised Book of Discipline," which they reported to

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 127, 277.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 555–557.
§ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 74; *1881*, p. 523.
‡ See p. 239.
‖ See p. 255.

the Assembly and sent to Ministers and Sessions, to show the progress made and to invite criticisms. In 1881 they presented a "second revision," asking to be continued, that they might perfect the work. In this revision of the "Book of Discipline" the proposed Court of Final Appeal is modified, and becomes "The Judicial Commission," which shall sit during the sessions of the Assembly, report on all appeals, etc., presenting a formal finding of facts, and enter judgment, which shall become final on the approbation of the Assembly. The committee were required to continue their work and present their complete report to the Assembly of 1882.*

May the Assembly try cases by a commission?

(See pp. 190, 218, 241 and 256.) Appendix, p. 528.

How often must the synodical records be examined?

Every year. If not presented, the Assembly may require the Synod to censure its Stated Clerk.† This examination is made by a committee, who report the result to the Assembly for approval. In 1880 it was determined that hereafter the Committee on Synodical Records shall consist each of five members, instead of two, as was formerly the custom.‡

V. What other powers has the Assembly?

"*To the General Assembly also belongs the power—*

5. "*Of deciding in all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline.*"

6. "*Of reproving, warning or bearing testimony against error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, in any church, Presbytery or Synod.*"

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, pp. 69, 164; *1877*, pp. 571, 572; *1880*, p. 36; *1881*, pp. 528, 573. See p. 274. See Second Revision of B. of D.

† See p. 244.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 82.

7. "*Of erecting new Synods when it may be judged necessary.*"

8. "*Of superintending the concerns of the whole Church.*"

9. "*Of corresponding with foreign churches on such terms as may be agreed upon by the Assembly and the corresponding body.*"

10. "*Of suppressing schismatical contentions and disputations.*"

11. "*And, in general, of recommending and attempting reformation of manners, and the promotion of charity, truth and holiness through all the churches under their care.*"

Can the Assembly answer questions in "thesi"?

"It does not appear that the constitution ever designed that the General Assembly should ever take up abstract cases and decide on them, especially when the object appears to be to bring these decisions to bear on particular individuals not judicially before the Assembly."*

What authority have the decisions of the Assembly?

Even its recommendations are of authority, coming as they do from a body representing the whole Church. Its recommendations concerning the Boards are obligatory.† Its replies to overtures are authoritative interpretations of the constitution. Its testimony on doctrine and morality is the Church's declaration of the meaning of the "Confession of Faith," and its application. And its judicial decisions are final and obligatory in all similar cases. No later Assembly can reverse its judicial acts or revise its proceedings. A manifest error may be corrected.‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 217. † *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 132.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 533, 534.

How are controversies respecting doctrine and discipline to be brought before the Assembly?

By review, reference, appeal or complaint.* Before the reunion all appeals, etc. were brought before the Assembly itself, except in a few cases. Now, owing to the size of the Assembly and the increasing press of business, they are, with consent of parties, referred to commissions appointed by the Assembly.†

Concerning what subjects has the Assembly borne testimony?

Heresies and imperfect statements of doctrine, explication of doctrines, testimony against certain disorders and irregularities, slavery, civil war, state of the country, duty of citizens, the authority of civil government, the assassination of the President, the power of the Assembly in determining lawful judicatories, the validity of the election of Elders, intemperance, the Sabbath, vices and immoralities, revivals, divorce, infanticide, operas, polygamy, use of opium, etc.‡

Has the Assembly any direct power over Synods?

It determines their formation and boundaries. At the reunion the Assembly, according to the concurrent declarations, erected fifty-one Synods. Since that time new Synods have been formed on petition of Presbyteries. If the Presbyteries interested have not been consulted the petition is rejected.§ The Synods were reorganized in 1881.‖ The Assembly may dissolve a Synod and distribute its Presbyteries.¶ It may order a

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. vii.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 564. See p. 218.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 218–250, 300–325, 475–495, 631–639; *Minutes G. A. 1876*, p. 27; *1879*, pp. 586, 607, 625; *1881*, pp. 548, 549.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 182–188; *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p 505.

‖ See p. 234.

¶ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 263.

Synod to meet or may change its time or place of meeting.* It may require a Synod to examine the state of religion in its bounds, and report the next year. It must examine and review the records of Synod.† It may cite Synods to appear and answer charges of irregularities in doctrine, government or discipline, and disown those which have departed from the standards of the Church.‡

Has the Assembly any direct power over Presbyteries?

It may erect, modify, change and dissolve Presbyteries. In 1802 it divided the Presbytery of Albany into three new Presbyteries without the proposal being first brought before the Synod, but simply on the petition of the Presbytery. It declared, however, that this act was "not to be considered as forming a precedent for future conduct." In 1805, 1826 and 1827 Presbyteries were formed by the Assembly on petition of Ministers and churches. In 1834 it was done against the decision of the Synod, the General Assembly claiming the right under the constitution to determine the bounds of Presbyteries (1) when the question was brought by complaint or appeal; (2) under extraordinary circumstances; (3) as being the highest judicatory of the Church.§ This power was exercised both by the O. S. and N. S. Assemblies several times, and by the reunited Church.‖ The Assembly may legalize the act of less than a quorum of Presbytery.¶ It can define the succession of Presbyteries.** Appendix, pp. 523, 526.

* See p. 237. † See p. 244.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 541; *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 726–744.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 263, 264.

‖ *Ibid.*, p. 266; *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 83; *1875*, p. 505.

¶ See p. 183. ** *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 267.

What direct power has the General Assembly over Sessions and churches?

It can transfer them from one Presbytery and Synod to another. This is done on petition from the church, the Presbyteries having been consulted. Such a change can be made by the Synod when both Presbyteries interested belong to the same Synod. But when two Synods are involved, the question should be decided by the General Assembly.* It may order a Presbytery to dissolve a pastoral relation when the case has been regularly brought before it, and the peace and prosperity of the Church render this course advisable.†

What power has the Assembly over Ministers?

It may transfer them from one Presbytery to another. This is involved in the power to divide Presbyteries. This has been done by the O. S. and the N. S. Assemblies.‡ The O. S. Assembly transferred a Minister on petition when the Presbytery was without a quorum of attending Ministers.§ And again, to increase the number of a Presbytery which had failed, from want of a quorum, in two attempts to organize.‖

What power has the Assembly to establish relations with other denominations of the Christian Church?

The lower courts may receive Ministers of other bodies as corresponding members, but only as individual Ministers. This does not imply any authoritative conference, the results of which are to be binding on the different denominations. The Minister thus recognized may help the Presbytery or Synod with his advice in discussion of our own affairs. The Assembly, as the highest court and rep-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 266; *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 82.
† *Minutes G. A. 1876*, p. 64. ‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 265, 266.
§ *Minutes G. A. 1858*, p. 268. ‖ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

resenting the whole body, is the only proper or possible organ of communication, correspondence and co-operation with other churches.* The Assembly can determine when, on what terms, and to what extent this correspondence is expedient, and when it shall terminate.†

With what bodies is the Assembly at present in correspondence?

1. General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland.
2. General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.
3. General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
4. Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Great Britain and Ireland.
5. General Assembly of the Canada Presbyterian Church.
6. Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland.
7. General Synod of the Reformed Church in America.
8. General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church of North America.
9. General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the United States.
10. Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the Lower Provinces of British North America and the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in connection with the Church of Scotland.
11. General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 267.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 47–98, 267–276; *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 506–559; *Minutes G. A. 1875*, pp. 480, 484–486; *1876*, pp. 18, 55.

12. General Assembly of the Welsh Presbyterian Church.

13. General Synod of the Reformed Church of France.

14. National Council of the Congregational Church in the United States of America.

15. Synod of the Waldensian Church.*

16. General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church.†

17. General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States.†

18. General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.†

19. General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.‡

How is the correspondence maintained?

Generally by the appointment of delegates to attend the annual meetings of the highest court of each denomination with which our Church is in correspondence. These are not only to present salutations, but to bring before these bodies everything that may concern the relations of these denominations and our own. There were three plans at first proposed of correspondence: (1) by letter between committees appointed by each body; (2) by conventions composed of delegates of equal number from each; (3) by sending delegates to each body, who shall sit in their respective meetings.§ These have all been tried; the latter, however, is the one finally adopted. In 1878 it was proposed and referred to the next Assembly that since the different branches of the Presbyterian churches throughout the world are now associated in the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 277.
† *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 529.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 54.
§ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 513.

General Presbyterian Alliance, and meet in its Triennial Councils, therefore it is no longer necessary to appoint annual delegates to the several churches joined in that Alliance.* In 1879 it was resolved "that the Assembly, with the most cordial esteem for the brethren of other Presbyterian churches, will in future decline to appoint any such delegates, and content themselves with the appointment of commissioners to the General Councils of the Alliance." †

What was the plan adopted with the General Association of Connecticut?

A standing committee of correspondence was appointed by each body, to communicate by frequent letters whatever may be mutually useful and to the general interest of the Redeemer's kingdom. Each may appoint a committee of three to attend in the other's annual meeting, with right to sit, communicate and deliberate (and to vote, as afterward amended) on all subjects. Traveling Ministers shall be acknowledged on the testimonials signed by Moderator of Presbytery or Association, or a member of Standing Committee. This was in 1792.‡ Similar plans were adopted with other Congregational bodies.

What was the Plan of Union?

The General Association of Connecticut in 1801 proposed "to consider the measures proper to be adopted by the General Association and the General Assembly for establishing an uniform system of church government between the inhabitants of the new settlements who are attached to the Presbyterian form of government and those who prefer the Congregational form." The object

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 119. † *Ibid., 1879*, p. 616. See p. 250.
‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 513.

was "to prevent alienation, and to promote union and harmony in those new settlements which are composed of inhabitants from these bodies." The next year the Plan of Union was adopted by both denominations, and continued in operation until 1837, when it was abrogated and declared to be unconstitutional as regards the Presbyterian Church, and destitute of authority as proceeding from the General Association of Connecticut.*

Its provisions were as follows:

1. Mutual forbearance and a spirit of acommodation were enjoined on the inhabitants of new settlements preferring these different forms of church government.

2. A Congregational church with a Presbyterian Pastor shall conduct its discipline according to Congregational order; the Pastor shall, however, be subject to Presbytery. Any difficulty between Pastor and church or any member shall be referred to the Presbytery, or to a council of Presbyterians and Congregationalists in equal numbers, according to agreement of parties.

3. A Presbyterian church with a Congregational Pastor shall conduct its discipline according to Presbyterian order. Any difficulty between the Pastor and the church or any member shall be referred, according to consent of parties, to the Association or to a council of Congregationalists and Presbyterians in equal numbers.

4. A mixed church, some of whose members are Presbyterians and others Congregationalists, shall choose a standing committee of communicants to exercise the discipline of the church. If a Presbyterian be by it placed under discipline, he may appeal to the Presbytery, whose decision should be final, unless the church consent to a

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 570–581, 716; *New Digest*, pp. 453–469.

further appeal to Synod and General Assembly. If a Congregationalist be by it placed under discipline, he may appeal to the body of the male communicants of the church, and the case may be referred to trial by a mutual council. The standing committee of such a church may send to Presbytery one of their number as delegate, who shall there have the same right to sit and act as if he were a Ruling Elder. This privilege of the committee-men (unordained) to sit in Presbytery was gradually extended to apply to Synod and General Assembly. The first case reported is that of Mr. D. W. Lathrop of Ellsworth in 1820. After some hesitation he was admitted to a seat in the Assembly.*

In 1831 the Assembly declared that the appointment of committee-men as commissioners from the Presbyteries is inexpedient and of questionable constitutionality. The next year and ever after they were refused seats in the Assembly.†

This Plan of Union, though made with the General Association of Connecticut, was not confined in its operations to that State. The Synods of Western Reserve, Utica, Genesee and Geneva, and the Presbyteries under their care, were formed in accordance with this Plan of Union.‡

Has the General Assembly power to consummate organic union with churches which are in correspondence with it?

No. It may propose plans of union (this is often done on petitions from Presbyteries or Synods), and perfect them to the satisfaction of the highest court of each body, but such plans must be sent down to

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 570–574; *New Digest*, pp. 453–455.

† *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 576–579; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 466.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 580, 737.

the Presbyteries for their approval before the final action of the Assembly.* Appendix, p. 529.

With what bodies has correspondence resulted in organic union?

1. In 1749 the Presbytery of Suffolk.†
2. In 1758 between the Synods of New York and of Philadelphia.‡
3. In 1766 the Presbytery of Dutchess county.†
4. In 1811 the Presbytery of Charleston.§
5. In 1822 the Associate Reformed Synod.‖
6. In 1852 the Charleston Union Presbytery.¶
7. In 1869 the O. S. and N. S. Assemblies.**

What were the terms upon which this last union was effected?

1. The title shall be retained, and all legal and corporate rights held prior to the division in 1838, and all such rights held by each in 1869.
2. The common standards shall be "sincerely received and adopted as containing the system of doctrine contained in holy Scripture." The "Government" and "Discipline" "shall be approved as containing the principles and rules of our polity."

Concurrent declarations were passed by the Assemblies of 1869:

1. All Ministers and churches in each body shall hold their respective connections in the reunited Church.
2. Imperfectly-organized churches shall become thoroughly Presbyterian within five years. No other such churches shall hereafter be received.††

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 77, 87–89, 91, 94.
† *Assembly's Digest*, p. 562.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 613.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 564.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 565.
¶ *Ibid.*, p. 789.
** *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 96.
†† See p. 34.

3. Bounds of Presbyteries and Synods shall be determined by the Assembly of the reunited Church.

4. Official records of each branch shall be preserved as the one history of the Church, but no rule or precedent approved by only one shall be of authority until re-established by the reunited Church, except where the rights of property are involved.

5. Corporate rights held by each shall be consolidated as far as practicable.

6. There shall be one set of Boards, which the churches shall be encouraged to sustain, though free to send their contributions into other channels.

7. The Boards and Permanent Committees shall be reconstructed and consolidated by the General Assembly.

8. The publications of each shall be issued; the Board of Publication of the reunited Church shall revise and perfect the catalogue.

9. Theological seminaries shall be under synodical or Assembly supervision.

10. It shall be the duty of all to study peace, avoiding needless references to past divisions, and conforming in practice to the general custom prior to the controversies which resulted in the separation.*

What is the Presbyterian Alliance?

In 1873 it was resolved to appoint a committee of three to correspond with other churches in this and other lands, holding by the Westminster standards, "with a view of bringing about an œcumenical council of such churches, to consider subjects of common interest to all, and especially to promote harmony of action in the mission-fields at home and abroad." This committee took advantage

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 90–93.

of the General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance at New York in October, 1873, and called together many belonging to different branches of the Presbyterian family of churches in Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, etc., as well as those in this country. These gave a very cordial approval of a federal union among all Presbyterian churches, and favored the calling of a Pan-Presbyterian convention. A circular letter was sent to thirty-five Presbyterian bodies in Europe and America, inviting them to appoint committees to determine the details of a general convention. The General Assembly appointed twelve Ministers and three Elders as its committee. The result was that a preliminary conference was held in London July 21, 1875, to which the General Assembly sent fourteen delegates. Twenty-two Presbyterian organizations in various parts of the world were represented. It was there decided to form "a permanent Presbyterian Alliance, to meet in general council from time to time in order to confer upon matters of common interest." A constitution was adopted, of which the following is an abstract:

I. NAME.—"The Alliance of the Reformed churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System."

II. MEMBERSHIP.—Churches organized on Presbyterian principles, whose creeds are in harmony with the consensus of the Reformed Confessions, are eligible.

III. THE COUNCIL.—

1. *Meetings.*—A Triennial General Council shall be held.

2. *Constituency.*—The delegates shall, as far as practicable, consist of an equal number of Ministers and Elders from each Church and in proportion to the number of con-

gregations. Presbyterians not delegates may be invited to speak and read papers.

3. *Powers.*—The Alliance shall decide on applications for admission, and consider any subject orderly brought before it. It cannot interfere with the constitution or with the internal or external relations of any Church in the Alliance.

4. *Object.*—To consider questions of general interest to the Presbyterian community; seek the welfare of churches, especially the weak and persecuted; gather information of the Church throughout the world; commend the Presbyterian system; and consider the work of evangelization, the distribution of mission-labor, combination of church energies, the training of Ministers, use of the press, the Sabbath, instruction of children, systematic beneficence, suppression of vices, and the methods of opposing infidelity and Romanism.

5. *Methods.*—By reading papers, delivering and publishing addresses, circulating information of allied churches and their missions, expounding scriptural principles, communicating its minutes to the supreme courts of the allied churches, etc.

6. *Committee on Business.*—Such shall be appointed, through which all communications and subjects shall pass.

IV. Change of Constitution.—No change shall be made except on motion at one meeting, not objected to by a majority of the churches, and carried by a two-thirds vote at the next General Council.

The General Assembly formally determined to enter into this Alliance, and approved of the above constitution, and chose forty delegates, thirty-one corresponding or associate members, to represent it at the first meeting,

which was held in July, 1877, in Edinburgh.* The second meeting was held in Philadelphia in 1880. The third is to be held in Belfast, Ireland, 1884.† At the request of the Council of the General Alliance, the Assembly appointed a committee of three Ministers and two Elders as a Permanent Committee on the Presbyterian Alliance for Correspondence.‡ App., p. 529.

What is schism?

A division or separation in a Church or denomination of Christians occasioned by diversity of opinion; a breach of unity among people of the same religious faith.§

What separations have taken place in the Presbyterian Church?

1. In 1745 the Synod of Philadelphia was divided by the withdrawal of "some brethren of New York," who "erected themselves into a Synod of New York."‖ This separation continued until 1758, when the two were reunited under the name of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia.¶

2. In 1766 the Donegal schism, the question at issue being the method of examining a candidate on his religious experience. A reunion was accomplished in 1768.**

3. In 1797 certain members of the Abington Presbytery of the Synod of the Carolinas withdrew because Rev. Hezekiah Balch was not disciplined for preaching

* *Minutes G. A. 1873*, p. 557; *1874*, pp. 19, 76; *1875*, pp. 472, 528; *1876*, pp. 22, 50–53, 81; *1877*, p. 501.

† *Ibid., 1881*, p. 551; *Report of Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance*, p. 900.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 515. § *Assembly's Digest*, p. 37.

‖ *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 181, 233.

¶ *Ibid.*, pp. 230, 285–288. ** *Assembly's Digest*, p. 620.

certain doctrinal errors. They formed an independent Presbytery, and were called "Independent Brethren."*

4. In 1804 the New-Light Party. Several Ministers of the Synod of Kentucky formally seceded and formed themselves into a Presbytery, renouncing the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church, because they could not retain the Confession of Faith as the standard of doctrine and discipline, declaring themselves "freed from all creeds but the Bible." Some of these afterward joined the Shakers, some the Campbellites; others in 1811 returned to our Church, while others retain their separation under the name of "Christians."†

5. In 1807 the Cumberland Presbytery was formed out of the western part of the Presbytery of Transylvania, and soon began to license and ordain men contrary to the "Form of Government," and without requiring adoption of the Confession of Faith. They refused to obey citations of Synod or the advice of General Assembly, and were suspended. They formed the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination.‡

6. In 1838 the separation between the Old and New School Assemblies. The necessity of the separation was long recognized by both parties. In 1837 a committee was appointed to propose a plan for an amicable division of the Church into two independent denominations. This was not found to be practicable. When the General Assembly met in 1838 at Philadelphia, while completing the organization, the New School party withdrew in a body to the First Presbyterian Church and organized as a General Assembly, claiming to be the true successor of the Assembly of 1837. The Old School party remained in

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 627–634. † *Ibid.*, pp. 634–640.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 640–646.

the Seventh Presbyterian Church and proceeded with its business, making a similar claim. The question was referred to the civil courts, which decided that the latter was the true successor of the Assembly of 1837, and had right to its title and to the funds belonging to the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The origin of the trouble dated as far back as 1801, in the Plan of Union formed with the General Association of Connecticut.* This gradually introduced and fostered much that was inconsistent with the principles of Presbyterianism. The chief causes which led to the separation were—

(1) Diversities of doctrinal beliefs.

(2) Practical modifications of the "Form of Government."

(3) The dissolution of "elective-affinity" courts.†

(4) Application and methods of discipline.

(5) Changes in forms of worship.

(6) The abrogation of the Plan of Union and the disowning of the Synods and Presbyteries formed under it.

(7) The influence exerted over our missionaries and our church courts by organizations for church work independent of all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, even of the General Assembly.

(8) Manner of educating Candidates.‡

The separate existence of the two bodies continued until 1869, when the reunion took place.§

7. In 1857 six synods in the Southern States connected with the N. S. Assembly withdrew, because of the adop-

* See p. 261. † See p. 176.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 656–801; *New Digest*, pp. 453–557.

§ See p. 264.

tion of a paper on slavery. They formed "The United Synod of the Presbyterian Church." In 1859 two other Synods in the Southern States followed them, and the Synod of Missouri assumed an independent position.*

8. In 1861 ten Synods, with the Presbyteries and churches under their care, within the Southern States, withdrew, and in December, 1861, organized a separate Church under another General Assembly. Its title now is "The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States." The reasons given were—state of the country, and especially deliverances of the General Assembly on slavery, rebellion and political questions.† In 1868 the General Assembly recognized the Southern Presbyterian Church as a distinct and separate ecclesiastical organization.‡ There have been several propositions for a reunion, but in 1877 the Assembly resolved that, while we are sincerely desirous to be reunited, it is not expedient to take at present any further action, but we are ready to send and receive delegates whenever the Southern Church is willing to enter into fraternal relations on such terms.§ Appendix, p. 529.

9. In 1867, Declaration and Testimony Men. In 1865 the General Assembly took certain action in regard to the method of receiving persons coming from Southern churches. A number of Ministers and Elders in the Synods of Kentucky and Missouri signed and published a paper called a "Declaration and Testimony," which was afterward adopted by the Presbytery of Louisville. This the Assembly declared to be a slander, schismatical and rebellious against the authority of the General As-

* See p. 459. *New Digest*, pp. 565–568.

† *Minutes G. A. 1866*, p. 83–90. ‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 273.

§ *Minutes G. A. 1876*, p. 55; *1877*, p. 570.

sembly, and called upon the signers to reconsider their action and withdraw all language deemed by the Assembly offensive or disrespectful. Some did so; the rest formed Presbyteries and the "Independent Synod of Missouri," which in 1874 united with the Southern Church. In the same year some Ministers, in behalf of themselves and several congregations, sent an overture to the General Assembly for reunion. This was favorably answered, and prayer and thanksgiving were offered. They returned as individuals a few years later.*

What is a pastoral or circular letter?

A letter ordered and adopted by the General Assembly and sent to the churches. These have been sent in the peculiar emergencies of the Church to explain the action of the Assembly; to warn against errors of doctrine, prevalent vices and sins, or irregularities in government or discipline; to counsel or to excite to greater spirituality and zeal.†

VI. What are constitutional rules?

Prior to 1805 these were called "Standing Rules." They are "articles of the constitution which, when once established, are unalterable by the General Assembly."‡

How are they made?

They may originate in the Assembly, but generally they appear before that body as overtures from the lower courts. If they are approved by the Assembly, they are sent down to the Presbyteries for their approval. "*Before any overtures or regulations proposed by the Assembly to be established as constitutional rules shall be obligatory on the churches, it shall be necessary to transmit them to all the Presbyteries, and to receive the returns of at least*

* *Minutes G. A. 1806*, p. 61; *1807*, p. 337; *1874*, pp. 27–30; *1877*, p. 872. † *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 280–325. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

a majority of them, in writing, approving thereof." If all the Presbyteries do not respond, the question may be deferred until the next Assembly; the answers already received may be reversed by the Presbyteries before the final count.*

Is the Assembly bound to adopt a constitutional rule which has been approved by a majority of the Presbyteries?

The Assembly having approved of the rule before it was sent to the Presbyteries, it is expected that the next Assembly will ratify it if approved by the Presbyteries. Yet it can decide against it, as in 1827 the Presbyteries approved an overture sent down to them, with exception of one article. This the Assembly regarded as essential, and rejected the whole, not deeming it wise to send it back to the Presbyteries.†

Can changes be made in the constitution?

The Synod of New York and Philadelphia, preparatory to the formation of the General Assembly in 1788, ordered a thorough revision of the standards—the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Government, Book of Discipline and Directory for Worship—and adopted them as amended to be the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, and determined that they be unalterable unless two-thirds of the Presbyteries shall propose amendments, and these shall be afterward enacted by the General Assembly. The Confession of Faith was amended only in regard to the power of civil government over the Church. The Larger and Shorter Catechisms were approved with only a slight amendment in the former.‡ There have been revisions

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 329. † *Ibid.*, p. 328.

‡ *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 525, 539, 546, 547; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 51.

of the Form of Government, Discipline and Directory in 1804 and in 1821. The doctrinal parts, the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, have not been touched. In 1804 the Assembly declared that no change in the Confession of Faith or in the Catechism ought to be attempted. "The creed of the Church, if it be once rightly settled, can never be altered with propriety by any change of time or external circumstances of the Church;" and many reasons are given. In 1844 a committee of the O. S. Assembly expressed as their opinion that there should be some orderly way of amending our formulas of doctrine, and that the old law of the Synod is still in force—viz. that the alterations of the doctrinal standards require a two-thirds vote of the Presbyteries, while constitutional rules (according to later amendments) may be adopted by a majority of the Presbyteries.* Since the reunion many have expressed a desire that certain changes might be made in the Book of Discipline, especially in simplifying the forms of process. In 1878 a committee of seven Ministers and five Elders were appointed "to consider whether any changes, amendments or additions should be made in our present Form of Government and Book of Discipline, and if so, what; and that the said committee report to the next Assembly." The committee reported in 1879, and in the following year presented a Revised Book of Discipline, that the Church might judge of the progress and character of their work. This was ordered to be printed and sent to every Pastor and Session.† In 1881 the committee reported progress, presented a "second revision" of the Book of Discipline,‡ and stated "that they were not prepared to report a re-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 51, 328.

† *Minutes G. A. 1880*, pp. 34–36. ‡ *Ibid., 1881*, p. 527.

vised Form of Government at this time." That important subject had engaged their attention. A minority report was also presented, objecting to the radical changes proposed. The report was recommitted with the following instructions:

"1. The Revision Committee is instructed to incorporate into the existing Form of Government the two amendments in regard to Synods just now adopted by the Presbyteries. The committee is also desired to propose to the next Assembly such verbal changes in the text of the Form of Government as may be needed for purposes of adaptation, and to report a form of words in which these changes may be proposed, by way of overture, to the Presbyteries for their adoption.

"2. The Assembly, while recognizing the great fidelity of the committee in its work, does hereby relieve it from the duty of revising or in any way amending the Form of Government, except in the verbal changes described in the first paragraph; and they are instructed to conform their Revision of the Book of Discipline to the present Form of Government.

"3. The committee is further instructed to put into their Revision of the Book of Discipline a distinct chapter on Protests and Dissents, substantially like that in the present Book of Discipline.

"4. The Assembly would urge upon the committee the importance of their submission of a final report to the next Assembly."

A resolution was adopted, "that in withdrawing the Form of Government from the Committee on Revision, the Assembly aims to preserve the quietude of the Church, and not in any way to reflect upon the wisdom or reliability of the committee, or the course of their proceedings

in prosecuting the work committed to them by the Assembly. We therefore feel entire confidence in recommitting the Book of Discipline to their consideration."*

How are the answers of the Presbyteries to be attested?

They must be signed by the Moderator and Stated Clerk. Presbyteries in foreign lands shall send their answers to the Stated Clerk of the Assembly, who shall report them as soon as possible. So the O. S. Assembly determined in 1867.†

When may the answers of the Presbyteries be counted?

The Assembly of 1867 also decided that the answers may be counted when a reasonable time has elapsed to hear from all the Presbyteries, and it is clear that the answers not received would not affect the result.†

VII. How often shall the Assembly meet?

"*At least once in every year.*" A suggestion has been frequently made that the Assembly should meet once in three years. In 1881 an overture was received asking for triennial Assemblies, but it was resolved almost unanimously "that in view of the changes involved in the adoption of the overtures on reconstruction of the Synods, and also in view of the pending report with reference to the 'Book of Discipline' and 'Form of Government,' it is not expedient to take action on that important subject at present."‡ Appendix, p. 533.

Can it hold an adjourned meeting?

In 1846 the opinion of Chancellor Kent of New York was obtained, who says: "I consider the power to be necessarily incident to every deliberative assembly, unless

* *Minutes G. A. 1881,* pp. 527, 573; Appendix, p. 532.

† *Presbyterian Digest,* p. 330.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1881,* p. 548. For standing orders, see p. 497.

specially prohibited by its charter." "The constitution of the Presbyterian Church leaves silently the same power of adjournment, precisely on the same footing of discretion." In 1869 both Assemblies met in May in New York, and they adjourned to meet in the city of Pittsburg in November of the same year, one in the First Church, and the other in the Third Presbyterian Church.*

Of whom must such a meeting be composed?

The commissioners who were enrolled as members of the Assembly, and they only, can sit as members of the adjourned meeting, except a vacancy occurs by death, resignation, refusal to attend; then the Presbytery may fill such vacancy. So the N. S. Assembly notified its Presbyteries in 1869, when informing them of the adjourned meetings to be held by both Assemblies at Pittsburg to consummate the reunion. At the adjourned meeting of the O. S. Assembly it was determined that all alternates with regular commissions may be enrolled, the principals being absent. The other Assembly was duly informed, and no objection seems to have been made.†

Can the Assembly hold a "pro re nata" meeting?

In the N. S. Assembly, when meeting once in three years, the Moderator, with the concurrence of the Stated and Permanent Clerks, could call a *pro re nata* meeting in any emergency, with four months' notice. After ten years' trial this plan was abolished.‡ The Assembly adjourns *sine die*, the Moderator dissolving the Assembly, and requiring another General Assembly to be chosen and to meet at such a time and place. He has no fur-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 96, 331. † *Ibid.*, p. 332.

‡ *New Digest*, pp. 596–602.

ther power. Even in the next Assembly, unless chosen again as a commissioner, he can only preach and preside until organization is effected; he has no vote.*

When does the Assembly meet?

"*On the day appointed for that purpose.*" The first General Assembly met on the third Thursday of May, at 11 A. M. Usage has fixed that day and hour as the time of the annual meeting.†

Who shall open the Assembly?

"*The Moderator of the last Assembly, if present, or, in case of his absence, some other Minister, shall open the meeting with a sermon, and preside until a new Moderator be chosen.*" The N. S. Assembly decided in 1861 that he need not be a commissioner, but has power to preserve order, give decisions on points of order, and, if necessary, give a casting vote.‡

Who shall open the Assembly if the Moderator be absent?

In 1835, Rev. S. Miller, D. D. (a previous Moderator), preached the sermon. The Stated Clerk called the Assembly to order, and moved that the last Moderator present, being a commissioner, preside; but the Assembly decided that it was not necessary that he be a commissioner, and chose Rev. W. A. McDowell, D. D., to preside during the organization; he was a previous Moderator, but not a member of that Assembly. In 1843 the O. S. Assembly decided that he must be a commissioner of the Assembly. The second rule for judicatories adopted in 1871 requires that "if the Moderator be absent, the last Moderator present, or if there be none the senior member present, shall be requested to take his place without delay until

* *Form of Government*, ch. xii., sects. vii. and viii.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 200. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 460. See p. 279.

a new election."* In 1880 this was changed by inserting the words "being a commissioner" after the words "the last Moderator present."†

How shall the Assembly be opened?

After the sermon the Moderator shall open the session with prayer. The committee of arrangements appointed the previous year generally makes a partial report, and a recess is taken, after which the Standing Committee (the Stated and Permanent Clerks) report on the commissions. Irregular commissions are referred to a special committee, the roll is completed and nominations for Moderator are called for. Any commissioner may nominate a candidate. The candidates shall vote and withdraw. The vote is taken *vivâ voce*, and a majority of all the votes elects the Moderator. A committee is appointed to bring him to the chair. The former Moderator shall then say, "Sir, it is my duty to inform you and announce to this house that you are duly elected to the office of Moderator of this General Assembly. For your direction in office, and for the direction of this Assembly in all your deliberations, I place in your hands this book, containing the rules for judicatories adopted by the Assembly, which I doubt not will be carefully observed by both in conducting the business that may come before you. And, praying that Almighty God may direct and bless all the deliberations of this Assembly for the glory of his name and for the edification and comfort of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, I resign my place and office as Moderator." The newly-installed Moderator generally makes a short reply as he takes the chair, and the Assembly is ready for business.‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 201, 205. † *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 45.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 203, 205. See p. 489.

May a Moderator serve more than once?

There is no rule prohibiting a re-election, but usage seems to forbid it, as no case of re-election has yet occurred.*

May the Moderator have a double vote?

"When a vote is taken by ballot in any judicatory, the Moderator shall vote with the other members, but he shall not vote in any other case unless the judicatory be equally divided; when, if he does not choose to vote, the question shall be lost." This casting vote, however, cannot be given if he has already given a (ballot) vote.†

May he at any time leave the chair?

In a judicial case, if the Moderator is a member of the court appealed from or a party in the case, he cannot retain his seat. The last Moderator present, or one chosen by the Assembly, shall take the chair. In 1866, in the O. S. Assembly, the former Moderator, Rev. J. C. Lowrie, D. D., seems to have been present, but by vote Rev. J. M. Krebs, D. D. (Moderator in 1845), was called to the chair.‡

When may a commissioner deliberate and vote?

Not "*until his name shall have been enrolled by the Clerk, and his commission examined and filed among the papers of the Assembly.*"

VIII. How shall each session of the Assembly be opened and closed?

"*Each session of the Assembly shall be opened and closed with prayer. And the whole business of the Assembly being finished, and the vote taken for dissolving the present Assembly, the Moderator shall say from the chair, 'By virtue*

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 854. † *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 203, 204.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 204; *Minutes G. A. 1866*, pp. 7, 48.

of the authority delegated to me by the Church, let this General Assembly be dissolved; and I do hereby dissolve it, and require another General Assembly, chosen in the same manner, to meet at ——— on the —— day of ——, A. D. ——.' *After which he shall pray and return thanks, and pronounce on those present the apostolic benediction.*" In addition to the prayer and benediction an appropriate psalm or hymn shall be sung.* In 1879 the Moderator in dissolving the Assembly added the words to the above formula, "in the First Presbyterian Church of Madison, Wis." When the Assembly met they did not assemble in that church, but in the State Capitol. The record shows that in the vote appointing the place of meeting no building was mentioned. The following action was taken: That "the Assembly, and not the Moderator, has the right and the power of fixing the place of meeting. The Assembly fixed the city of Madison, and left the present Assembly to seek its own place or house in which to meet. This Assembly selected this hall, after it was so kindly and generously tendered by His Excellency the governor of this State. There can be no question but that the meeting in this hall is regular, and in conformity with the order of the last Assembly and of the law and constitution of the Church."†

* *General Rules for Judicatories,* xliii. See p. 497.

† *Minutes G. A. 1879,* p. 619, 634; *1880,* p. 81.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF ELECTING AND ORDAINING RULING ELDERS AND DEACONS.

I. Should there be definite rules for the election and ordination of church officers, binding on all the churches?

The Church is one. The officers of a particular church have duties to the whole Church, the most important of which are performed in the several judicatories. In these they ought to meet and act with each other as "representatives of the people," elected and ordained in the same way. The presence of unordained committee-men in our church courts under the Plan of Union was a great evil and unconstitutional.* "*Having defined the officers of the Church, and the judicatories by which it shall be governed, it is proper here to describe the mode in which ecclesiastical rulers should be ordained to their respective offices, as well as some of the principles by which they shall be regulated in the discharge of their several duties.*"

II. How are officers to be elected?

"*Every congregation shall elect persons to the office of Ruling Elder and to the office of Deacon, or either of them, in the mode most approved and in use in that congregation.*" The ecclesiastical principles must be the same—the mode of carrying out these may differ in the several churches. The Elders and Deacons must be elected by the people, but whether this shall be done directly or indirectly is determined by the usage in each church. In 1827, recognizing the right of every church in this matter, the Assembly said that "they are inclined to believe that the spirit of our constitution would be most fully sustained

* See p. 263.

by having in all cases a direct vote of the congregation in the appointment of Elders." The mode most approved and in use may be changed by a vote of the congregation.* Appendix, p. 533.

Who determines when it is expedient to have an election?

The congregation may petition the Session to call a meeting for that purpose. The Session must judge whether it be expedient. If it refuse, a complaint may be made to Presbytery, who may order the Session to call the meeting. The Session may suggest the number to be elected, and nominate the persons, but cannot interfere with the freedom of the election.†

Does irregularity invalidate the election?

If the meeting be called without the action of the Session or a higher court, it is irregular. In 1856 the O. S. Assembly decided, in the case before it, that the irregularity was not sufficient to invalidate the election, yet recommended that the Elders and Deacons thus elected cease to act until the Presbytery deems the church reasonably harmonious in receiving them in their official capacity. In 1835 the Assembly declared that the election of Elders for a term of years is irregular, but this cannot invalidate the ordination of those thus elected.‡ In 1798 certain persons were selected by the Pastor and ordained as Elders without an election by the people. The Assembly declared that they were not Elders, and must be regarded as private members only.§

Who may vote for Elders and Deacons?

In 1822 the Assembly declared that it was desirable

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 341. See p. 56.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 337, 341, 350.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 338, 342. See p. 294. § *Ibid.*, p. 337.

that communicants only should have the right to vote, yet as custom in some churches has extended the right to members who are not communicants, such election should not be considered void. The Elder is a representative of the people, to exercise spiritual rule in the church; an unbaptized person, not belonging to the visible kingdom of Christ (though a pewholder), can have no right to decide who shall be officers and exercise discipline in the church. In 1855 the O. S. Assembly, "in accordance with the decision of former Assemblies, judged it most consonant to our 'Form of Government' that communicants only should vote in the election of Elders." And the same rule must apply to Deacons, as the elections of both sets of officers are considered together.* Communicants under discipline, being suspended from the privileges of church members, are of course debarred from voting for officers. Members whose names have been placed on the reserved list, appearing, cannot claim a right to vote until the Session shall summon them and inquire concerning their deportment during their absence, and shall restore their names to the roll of members. So the O. S. Assembly decided in 1865.† This rule applies also to those who have for two years absented themselves from the services of their own church, yet against whom the Session has not deemed it expedient to proceed in discipline. In 1859 the N. S. Assembly declared that minors, if communicants, have a right to vote, as "it is not in accordance with the principles and usages of the Presbyterian Church to distinguish between members of the church as to the ages in voting" or in the enjoyment of their other privileges.‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 341, 342. See p. 56.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 625–628. See p. 148. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 342.

Who may be elected as Ruling Elders and Deacons?

"*In all cases the persons elected must be male members in full communion in the church in which they are to exercise their office.*" They should of course possess the qualifications set forth in Scripture, and the gifts necessary for the discharge of their duties.* Ministers cannot be elected, even if unemployed and disposed to serve. They are not members of the particular church, but Ministers, having their own functions, and are members of Presbytery.† "On foreign missionary ground it may be expedient for a Minister to perform temporarily the function of a Ruling Elder without having been specially set apart to the office."‡ Appendix, p. 520.

III. May a person duly elected decline the office?

The call to an office in the Church is really from God, who makes known his will through his word, providence and Spirit. The person elected to an office ought not to accept or decline it because of personal preference, but should consider prayerfully, (1) that God gives the qualifications and duties of the office described in the word of God; (2) that he guides his people in their choice of officers; and (3) that his providential dealings reveal his will concerning each one (Matt. 10 : 5–42; Acts 20 : 28; 1 Tim. 5 : 17; Rom. 12 : 6; Acts 6 : 1–6). The Southern Church says: "Ordinary vocation to office in the Church is the calling of God by the Spirit, through the inward testimony of a good conscience, the manifest approbation of God's people and the concurring judgment of the lawful court of Christ's house, according to his word."§ When one has been elected to an office he should have

* See p. 56. † *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 84.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 339, 340.

§ *Book of Church Order*, ch. vi., sect. i.

time for consideration, and when he "*shall have declared his willingness to accept thereof, he shall be set apart in the following manner.*"

IV. What is ordination?

It is the solemn setting apart of one by prayer and the laying on of hands to an office in the Christian Church (Acts 6 : 6; 13 : 2, 3; 1 Tim. 4 : 14). The imposition of hands "is in accordance with apostolic example, and in the opinion of the Assembly it is proper and lawful;" yet each church may adopt the other method of ordination, simply by prayer.*

What is the difference between ordination and installation?

Ordination inducts into the office, making him a Ruling Elder or Deacon; installation gives him authority to exercise his office over a particular church. Ordination is not to be repeated when a Ruling Elder or Deacon removes to another church, and is called to exercise his office there, but he must be installed in that church.*

Are ordination and installation necessary?

A person, though elected, is not an Elder, has no seat in Session or other church courts, until he be ordained. Nor has he any official relation to the particular church until he be installed. If after installation he remove or in any way terminate the exercise of his office, re-election and installation are necessary.† In 1868 the N. S. Assembly determined that if an Elder return an unused certificate of dismissal, giving satisfactory reasons to the Session for not using it, he may be restored to the membership of the church, and that he is thereby reinstated as an acting Elder of the particular church.‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 347. See pp. 57, 197.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 347, 349, 351; *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 46. See pp. 290-298.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 352.

What is the form of the ordination service?

(1) "*After sermon, the Minister shall state in a concise manner the warrant and nature of the office of Ruling Elder or Deacon, together with the character proper to be sustained and the duties to be fulfilled by the officer elect.*" (2) In the presence of the congregation the candidate shall make his ordination vows in answer to the constitutional questions,* and the church shall express their readiness to receive and submit to him in the Lord.* (3) He shall then be ordained. (4) He and the congregation shall receive a charge from the Minister. And (5) the right hand of fellowship shall be given to him by the members of the existing Session in the presence of the congregation.†

Who is to perform this service?

The Pastor of the church. If the church is being organized, the chairman of the committee of Presbytery shall ordain the officers.‡

In regard to the act of ordination there is a difference of opinion. Some hold that the ordaining power belongs alone to the Minister, and therefore the Pastor only should lay on hands. Others, while denying to Elders any part in the ordination of Ministers, hold that they should take part with the Pastor in the laying on of hands in the ordination of Elders and Deacons.

In this section nothing is said about laying on of hands, but simply that "*the Minister shall proceed to set apart the candidate by prayer to the office of Ruling Elder (or Deacon, as the case may be).*" Some have therefore concluded that the laying on of hands should be performed only in the ordination of Ministers, where it is

* See pp. 288, 289. † See p. 290. ‡ See p. 32.

required.* In 1851 the O. S. Assembly was overtured "to determine whether, in the ordination of Elders and Deacons, it is unconstitutional or otherwise improper to use the rite of laying on of hands by the existing Eldership." And it was resolved, "That the Session of the ——— church be referred to the minutes of the Assembly of 1842 for an answer to said overture." This decision was, "that it is left to the discretion of each church Session to determine the mode of ordination in this respect"—by the imposition of hands or simply by prayer. Before the division of the Church, the Assembly in 1833 declared that "the imposition of hands, however, we are aware, in many of our churches is practiced; and as it is plainly in accordance with apostolic example, it is the opinion of the Assembly that it is proper and lawful. We conceive that every church in this respect may with propriety be left to adopt either of these two modes as they think suitable and best."†

Is it necessary that Elders or Deacons should adopt the standards of the Church?

The constitutional questions require it. A communicant is received on profession of faith in the redemption of Christ; no other term of communion can be demanded.‡ When he becomes an officer, to exercise rule and discipline, and in the different courts to decide on questions of doctrine, he must receive, adopt and approve of the standards of the Church.

What vows must the Elder or Deacon make at ordination?

They are contained in the constitutional questions which the Minister "*shall propose to the candidate in presence of the congregation*"—viz.:

* *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. xiv. See p. 353.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 347. ‡ See p. 137.

1. *"Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?"*

2. *"Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?"*

3. *"Do you approve of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in these United States?"*

4. *"Do you accept the office of Ruling Elder (or Deacon, as the case may be) in this congregation, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof?"*

5. *"Do you promise to study the peace, unity and purity of the Church?"*

What is the form of installation?

The fourth and fifth of the above questions, having reference to the exercise of the office in the particular church, are a part of the installation service. *"The Elder or Deacon elect having answered these questions in the affirmative, the Minister shall address to the members of the church the following question, viz.:"*

"Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a Ruling Elder (or Deacon), and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord to which his office, according to the word of God and the constitution of this Church, entitles him?"

"The members of the church having answered this question in the affirmative by holding up their right hands, the Minister shall proceed to set apart the candidate by prayer to the office of Ruling Elder (or Deacon), etc." If, however, he has been ordained, "the Minister shall," on receiving the reply of the members of the church, "declare him to be an Elder (or a Deacon) of that church."

"He shall give to him and to the congregation an exhortation suited to the occasion." *

V. What is the meaning of the giving the right hand of fellowship?

"When there is an existing Session, it is proper that the members of that body, at the close of the service and in the face of the congregation, take the newly-ordained Elder by the hand, saying in words to this purpose: 'We give you the right hand of fellowship to take part of this office with us.'" It is a solemn public recognition of the newly-ordained officers by those already in office—a welcoming them to their responsibilities and labors as fellow-laborers in Christ's Church, and a pledge of sympathy and of co-operation (Gal. 2 : 9).

Are ordination and installation necessary before an elected Elder can take his seat in the Session or take part in judicial acts?

So the N. S. Assembly decided in 1868. A judicial decision rendered by a Session of unordained men would not be valid, lawful or binding on the accused. In 1849 the O. S. Assembly declared that when an Elder in any way terminated his relation to the Session by whom he was ordained, he requires installation before he can regularly exercise again the office in the same church or in any other.† This was reaffirmed by the Assembly in 1878.‡ This is true also in regard to term-Elders continuing or resuming the exercise of their office after the term for which they were at first elected has expired.§

VI. Are these offices perpetual?

"The offices of Ruling Elder and Deacon are both perpetual, and cannot be laid aside at pleasure." "But

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 348.
† *Ibid.*, p. 347.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 71.
§ See p. 298.

while the office is perpetual, the time of its exercise in each individual congregation may be left to the decision of the church itself."*

How may a Ruling Elder or Deacon cease to act?

1. By removal from the church in which he was installed.†

2. By deposition after trial.‡

3. "*An Elder or Deacon may become by age or infirmity incapable of performing the duties of his office.*"

4. "*Or he may, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, become unacceptable in his official character to a majority of the congregation to which he belongs.*"

5. If an Elder cannot acquiesce in the decisions of the superior courts, he should resign.§

6. By the recommendation or order of the superior courts.‖

7. By the expiration of his term of service.¶

If an officer be dismissed to another church, when does his official relations terminate?

"The dismissal of a Ruling Elder by letter from a church terminates his official relation to that church." So the N. S. Assembly determined in 1867, and the next year added, "that if he returned his certificate of dismissal unused, with reasons satisfactory to the Session, his reception again by the Session reinstates him in office."**

Does suspension from the communion involve suspension from office?

An Elder must be "in full communion." If, there-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 349. † *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 351. See p. 59.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 116. § *Ibid.*, p. 349; see p. 298; *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 47.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 350.
¶ See p. 294. ** *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 351, 352.

fore, he lose his standing as a member, he ceases to be an Elder. Restoration to church privileges does not restore him to office. "He cannot be restored to the functions of his office without a special and express action of the Session for that purpose, with the acquiescence of the church." But an Elder may be suspended from office and not from the communion. He may be unfaithful as an officer, yet be not chargeable with anything against his character as a communicant. So there may be reasons for continuing his suspension from office after he be restored to church privileges.*

May an Elder without charge sit in a church court?

In 1835 the Assembly declared that an Elder without charge could not sit as a member of a church court.* In 1875 an eighth section was added to this chapter of the "Form of Government," permitting the election of Elders for a term of service, and provision is made for those Elders whose term has expired "to represent that particular church in the higher judicatories when appointed by the Session or the Presbytery." †

Who is to judge of the incapacity of an officer to serve?

He may be conscious of it, or the Pastor or Session may inform him of the fact: they are his proper advisers.

VII. What action shall the Session take?

"*Whenever a Ruling Elder or Deacon from either of these causes, or from any other not inferring crime, shall be incapable of serving the church to edification, the Session shall take order on the subject, and state the fact, together with the reason of it, on their records. Provided always that nothing of this kind be done without the concurrence of the individual in question, unless by the advice*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 349. See p. 219. † See p. 297.

of Presbytery." If he consent, the Session may relieve him of his active duties. He remains an Elder, but is without charge. If he refuse to concur, the record goes before Presbytery for review, and that body may give advice that he cease to be an acting Elder, or the Session may bring the matter before the Presbytery by reference or by petition. If the reasons of his incapacity infer crime, he should be regularly tried and disciplined.

How may his unacceptability be ascertained?

The Session, according to this section, is the proper body to inform the officer when this unacceptability is manifest and increasing. A passing dissatisfaction, because of some official action or arising from peculiar circumstances, is not here contemplated, and should not be a reason for his retirement; but reference is made to a permanent unacceptability, which cannot be removed, and which will interfere with his usefulness. It would evidently be improper and destructive of the unity and peace of the church for meetings to be called or petitions to be circulated to test the acceptability of officers. In 1863 the O. S. Assembly sustained a complaint "that the Synod had by a committee visited the ——— church to see if any member of the Session was unacceptable to the people." And in 1867 it was asked, "Has a church Session the right to submit to their church members the acceptableness or non-acceptableness of the acting board of Ruling Elders, or any portion of the board, and to ask the church to settle the question by a vote of the members?" The answer given was: "In case of unacceptableness on the part of any member of a church Session, and the matter cannot be amicably arranged by consent of parties, the proper method of redress is by memorializing the Presbytery to give such directions as

in its judgment the necessities of the case may require under the provisions of the 'Form of Government.'"*

May the Presbytery, without the request of the Session, require the retirement of an officer?

In 1869 the O. S. Assembly referred to "Form of Government," ch. x., sect. viii., and replied that Presbytery has power to visit its churches, inquire into their state, redress evils, and "to order whatever pertains to their spiritual welfare, without being requested by the Session."* Of course the Session or the Elder has the right to complain to the Synod of any improper exercise of this power.

May the Presbytery order the restoration of an Elder who has resigned?

He has consented to the act of Session, and has ceased to be an acting Elder. This is not a judicial action of the Session, and the Presbytery is not competent to reverse it. It has been done according to the order given in this section. The Elder can be restored only by a new election by the church.†

If an Elder refuse to act and leave the church, is he to be regarded as an Elder of that church?

The Session should take action, declaring the facts of the case, or tabling charges against him for his disorderly conduct.‡

VIII. May Ruling Elders be elected for a term of years?

"*If any particular church, by a vote of members in full communion, shall prefer to elect Ruling Elders for a limited time in the exercise of their functions, this may be done.*" The office is perpetual. But a distinction is here made between the office and the exercise of its functions — between an acting Elder and one who is

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 350. † *Ibid.*, p. 351. ‡ See p. 148.

for the time not exercising his office, as in the case of an Elder removing out of the bounds of the congregation which elected him. This section was added in 1875. The constitution evidently required an Elder to continue in the discharge of his duties until removal or age disqualified him. In 1849 the N. S. Assembly decided that they are not prepared to recommend a change in the constitution which would authorize Elders to be elected for a term of years, "believing that the evils of [such] a change would far outweigh those of the present system." In 1857 the O. S. Assembly resolved that it was not expedient to send down to the Presbyteries the proposed alterations of the constitution, making the office temporary. In 1869, in a judicial case, it condemned the action of a church adopting the plan of electing Elders for a term of years.* After the reunion, in a judicial case in 1872, this question was involved, and by the final vote—145 to 173—a complaint (against the election of Elders for a term of service) was not sustained. The minute adopted was: "The case seemed to present in a judicial form the question of the interpretation of our constitution concerning the election of Elders and Deacons, and yet many of the Assembly do not regard it as really involving that question. Hence, in defining its own action the Assembly is not to be understood as deciding that in any case the actual service of the Eldership should be either permanent or limited; but, while the office is perpetual, the time of its exercise in each individual congregation may be left to the decision of the church itself, according to the mode approved and in use in such church." The next year many overtures were presented, and were referred to a committee of seven to

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 343.

report to the Assembly of 1874, which sent down an overture to the Presbyteries. This was declared in 1875 to be adopted by the vote of 101 in the affirmative, 36 in the negative and 3 divided. Thus the eighth section of this chapter was added.* It is left to each church to determine whether to adopt this plan (which is called that of the "Rotary Eldership" or "Term Eldership"), or the old plan, which has always been recognized and practiced in the Church, and which is called the "Permanent Eldership."

For how long a term may Elders be elected?

"*Provided the full term be not less than three years, and the Session be made to consist of three classes, one of which only shall be elected every year.*" When a church shall determine to elect Ruling Elders for a limited time, "they shall be elected and set apart to their office; Elders in office by virtue of an earlier appointment cease to be acting Elders in that particular church."† They are of course eligible for a re-election under this new plan. At the first election the three classes must be formed, but this section does not determine how this is to be done. There are three methods which would be in conformity with church usage: (1) The congregation may determine the number of Elders to be elected, and proceed to elect, some for one year, some for two, and others for three years. Thus the Board of Publication was reorganized in 1870.‡ (2) The congregation may elect the whole number, whose names shall be arranged alphabetically and divided into three classes, who shall serve one, two and three years. Thus the organization of the Board of

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 345; *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 61; *1875*, p. 520.

† *Minutes G. A., 1876*, p. 74. ‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 438.

Foreign Missions was effected in 1837.* (3) The congregation may elect the whole number, and leave them to determine how the division into classes is to be effected. After the first election there must be an annual election of Elders, who shall serve for three years. Judging from the practice of the Assembly in regard to its Boards, it would not be improper at these annual elections to choose Elders to serve through the unexpired term of those who for any reason have ceased to be acting Elders. The Session cannot be divided into more or less than three classes. The classes must be as nearly equal in number as possible, and the election must take place annually. There is nothing to forbid the re-election of those whose term has just expired; indeed, the Assembly ordinarily re-elects the members of Boards, so that without interruption they retain their positions for many years. Appendix, p. 534.

How are the Elders to be regarded who are not re-elected?

The "*Elders, once ordained, shall not be divested of the office when they are not re-elected.*" They are still Elders; their advice may be obtained by the Session, although they can have no vote there. They cannot appear as counsel of an accused person before the Session, for such counsel must belong to the judicatory before which he appears.† "*But [they] shall be entitled to represent that particular church in the higher judicatories when appointed by the Session or the Presbytery.*" This has been interpreted by the Assembly of 1876 "that the Elders referred to, by due appointment of the Session or Presbytery, may become members of any of the courts of the Church above the Session."‡

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 430. † *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv., sect. xxi.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1876*, p. 74.

Must re-elected Elders be reinstalled?

The Assembly in 1878 decided that they must be reinstalled before they can resume their seats in Session.* In 1880 the Assembly was asked, "Is the reinstallation of Elders, re-elected on the expiration of their term of service, essential to the continued exercise of their office in that church, so that unless reinstalled they cease to be members of the Session?" In reply reference was made to the action in 1878, "with the expression of this Assembly, that when any persons or Sessions are informed of the judgment and will of the highest court of the Church in exposition of matters of government or law, a refusal or neglect to obey and regard the law and judgment so expressed would seem to be a clear indication that such parties should not sit or act in a Session." This action "is not intended to be retroactive, or in any way to affect the validity of the action of Sessions in which Elders regularly elected, but not reinstalled, may have sat as members."† In 1881 the Assembly was asked to allow congregations to reinstall re-elected Ruling Elders or not, according to their usage and discretion. The following reply was made: "While it is not essential to the validity of his office that a Ruling Elder, re-elected in a church where the limited-term service prevails, be reinstalled, it is nevertheless more orderly that the fact of his re-election be recognized by his reinstallation, or in some way equivalent thereto."‡ Appendix, p. 534.

May a church having adopted the term Eldership return to the plan of the permanent Eldership?

It may, by a vote of the members in full communion. Yet such changes ought not to be made without due con-

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 71. † *Ibid., 1880*, pp. 46, 47, 84.
‡ *Ibid., 1881*, p. 591.

sideration and with a view of establishing a permanent custom in the church.* This is implied also in this section.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF LICENSING CANDIDATES OR PROBATIONERS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

I. Who are Candidates?

They are male communicants applying for admission into the ministry, and who are in course of preparation for it. They receive the title as soon as they make formal application and are taken under care of Presbytery. They are called Probationers, because they are under trial, "*that the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the talents of those by whom they are to be instructed and governed.*" "*The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously had of them who are to be ordained to the ministry of the gospel, that this sacred office may not be degraded by being committed to weak and unworthy men.*" They continue Candidates or Probationers until they be ordained as Ministers or be regarded by the Presbytery as uncalled to the sacred office. None should be received as Candidates unless they be convinced that they have been called of God to the ministry, and satisfy the Presbytery as to "the motives which influence them to desire the sacred office." †

Who are Probationers?

The O. S. Assembly made a distinction between Candidates and Probationers, regarding students under care

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 341. † See p. 195.

of Presbytery in their preparatory course as Probationers, and as Candidates after they enter upon their theological studies.* But our "Form of Government" uses the term *Candidates* to include all who, under the care of Presbytery, are preparing for the ministry, and *Probationers* to describe those who are licensed to preach. †

What is a call to the ministry?

"The Protestant doctrine, as we understand it, on this subject is this: First, that the call of the ministry is by the Holy Ghost. . . . The Holy Ghost confers the gifts for the ministry; and by thus conferring them, and exciting the desire to exercise them for the glory of God and the service of Christ, thereby manifests his will that those thus favored should consecrate themselves to the preaching of the gospel. This is the true divine call to the ministry. Second, the evidence of this call to him who receives it, is the consciousness of the inward gift and drawing of the Spirit, confirmed by those external workings of Providence which indicate the will of God as to his vocation. The evidence of the Church is everything which tends to prove that the Candidate has the qualifications for the office of the ministry, and that he is led to seek it from motives due to the operation of the Holy Ghost. Third, ordination is the solemn expression of the judgment of the Church, by those appointed to deliver such judgment, that the Candidate is truly called of God to take part in this ministry, thereby authenticating to the people the divine call. This authentication or ordination is, under all ordinary circumstances, the necessary condition for the exercise of the ministry in the Church." ‡ The Assembly has frequently urged parents to consecrate

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 403. † See chs. xiv. and xv.

‡ *Church Polity*, p. 348.

their infant sons to the ministry, as was Samuel (1 Sam. 1 : 11), praying that God would call them to this high office, and instructing them as to the honor of being thus chosen of God and the Church's need for more Ministers. When one is considering the question he should seek the advice of his Pastor and the Elders of the church.*

May a woman be a Candidate?

In 1872 the Assembly reiterated the deliverance of the Assembly of 1832: "Meetings of pious women by themselves for conversation and prayer, whenever they can conveniently be held, we entirely approve. But let not the inspired prohibitions of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, as found in his Epistles to the Corinthians and to Timothy, be violated. To teach and exhort or lead in prayer, in public and promiscuous assemblies, is clearly forbidden to women in the holy oracles."† In 1874 the Assembly, in response to an overture, "expresses no opinion as to the scriptural view of woman's right to speak and pray in the social prayer-meeting, but commits the whole subject to the discretion of the Pastors and Elders of the churches."‡ This does not authorize any woman to apply as a Candidate for the ministry. In 1878 the Assembly refused to sustain an appeal against the decision of the Presbytery and Synod condemning a Pastor for introducing into his pulpit a woman, permitting and encouraging her to preach and teach. The Synod held "that the passages of Scripture referred to in the action of the Presbytery (1 Cor. 14 : 33–37 and 1 Tim. 2 : 11–13) do prohibit the fulfilling by women of the offices of public preachers in the reg-

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 184; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 361.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 353. ‡ *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 66.

ular assemblies of the Church;" "and the Assembly reaffirmed the language above quoted from the decision of the Synod as expressing their own opinion."*

How are Candidates to be tested?

"*For this purpose Presbyteries shall license Probationers to preach the gospel, that after a competent trial of their talents, and receiving from the churches a good report, they may in due time ordain them to the sacred office.*" Licensure is therefore a part of their trial for the ministry.

II. To what Presbytery should the Candidate apply?

"*Every Candidate for licensure shall be taken on trial by that Presbytery to which he most naturally belongs, and he shall be considered as most naturally belonging to that Presbytery within the bounds of which he has ordinarily resided.*" In 1856 the N. S. Assembly, and in 1857 the O. S. Assembly, recommended that Candidates should be required to put themselves under the care of Presbytery as soon as possible, that they may receive careful supervision during their entire course. This was reiterated in 1872, when Candidates were required "to connect themselves with Presbyteries to which they naturally belong, unless for extraordinary reasons, of which the Presbyteries must be the judges."† "*But in case any Candidate should find it more convenient to put himself under the care of a Presbytery at a distance from that to which he most naturally belongs, he may be received by the said Presbytery on his producing testimonials, either from the Presbytery within the bounds of which he has commonly resided, or from any two Ministers of that Presbytery in good standing, of his exemplary piety and other requisite qualifications.*"

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 102. See pp. 74, 81.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 365, 366.

The time when a Candidate should be received must be determined by circumstances. This section and the decisions of the Assembly above quoted require that he should be under the care of Presbytery during the whole of his theological course. Sometimes, however, a Candidate needs aid from the Church in his academical and collegiate course, in which case he must be received under the care of Presbytery before he is recommended to the Board of Education.* In 1872 the Assembly decided that no Candidate should be recommended to the Board for aid "until he has been a member of the Church at least one year, and has also passed his classical studies for an academic year, except in extraordinary cases to be determined by the Board."†

III. How is a Candidate to be received under the care of Presbytery?

"The application for his reception ought usually to be made by his Pastor or a member of the Presbyterial Committee on Education."* "*It is proper and requisite that Candidates applying to Presbytery to be licensed to preach the gospel produce satisfactory testimonials of their good moral character, and of their being regular members of some particular church.*" This is usually done by the Pastor, or in his absence by the applicants presenting a certificate from the Session, testifying to their standing in the church, and the recommendation of them as giving good promise of usefulness in the ministry. It is not uncommon for the Presbytery to appoint a committee to converse in private with the applicants and to report concerning the impression made upon them of their fitness. "*It is the duty of the Presbytery, for their satisfaction in regard to the real piety of such Candidates, to examine*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 361. † *Ibid.*, p. 366.

them respecting their experimental acquaintance with religion, and the motives which influence them to desire the sacred office. This examination should be close and particular, and in most cases may best be conducted in the presence of the Presbytery only." If this be satisfactory, they are received under care of Presbytery.* The O. S. Assembly made a distinction between those who were in their preparatory course and those who had entered upon their theological training, preferring "that young men within their bounds who are looking forward to the work of the ministry should be officially recognized as Candidates under the care of Presbyteries only when they are prepared to enter their theological studies, and that until that time they be regarded simply as students on probation, under the general watch and patronage of the Presbytery."† But the "Form of Government" does not make this distinction between Candidates and Probationers.‡ Nor does the reunited Church.

Must the Candidate be a communicant in the Presbyterian Church?

If he be a member of some other Church, he must be regularly dismissed to and received by a Presbyterian church before he can be taken under the care of Presbytery as a Candidate. The Assembly defined the phrase "some particular church" to mean "some particular Presbyterian church."§

What supervision should the Presbytery take of the studies of the Candidate?

The O. S. Assembly in 1860 enjoined "upon every Presbytery which has not so done, to appoint a com-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 310, 363.

† *Assembly's Digest*, p. 403.

‡ See p. 299.

§ *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 84.

mittee, whose duty it shall be to make careful inquiry as to the conduct and progress in study of all the Candidates under its care, and to make report to their Presbytery at every stated meeting, or oftener if presbyterial action is needed."* The Candidate is under the direction of the Presbytery in regard to his studies. The Presbytery may at any time arrest his progress if it be discovered that he is unfit to proceed in trial for the sacred office.† In reference to the supervision of Candidates, "it is important to remember that theological seminaries are intended to educate students, and not to determine their qualifications for the sacred office. The duties and responsibilities of Presbyteries are not to be transferred to educational institutions;" "that the rules of the Board of Education in reference to the supervision of Candidates under its care, by Presbyteries, be carefully followed; and that Presbyteries give much careful attention to the official reports of the theological faculties and of the Secretary of the Board concerning the standing of Candidates under their care, and endeavor to secure a high grade of scholarship and personal piety."‡

What is the Board of Education?

In 1819 the Assembly established a Board of Education, "to assist such Presbyteries and associations in educating pious youth for the gospel ministry, both in their academical and theological course." This was continued "by the O. S. branch of the Church from 1838 to the reunion." "From 1838 to 1854 the N. S. branch co-operated chiefly with the American Education Society or its branches; in 1854 the 'Permanent Committee of Education for the Ministry' was established." At the re-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 365. † *Ibid.*, p. 402. See p. 195.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 544.

union the Board of Education was reorganized and incorporated, and an act was obtained "authorizing the transfer of the property of the Permanent Committee on Education to the Board of Education."* The first action of our Church to aid Candidates was in 1751, when the Synod of New York recommended "to all their members, as far as prudence may direct, to make another annual collection for the support of young students whose circumstances render them incapable to maintain themselves at learning, and for other charitable purposes; which contributions shall be at the disposal of such respective Presbyteries where they are made."† In 1879 the Assembly adopted a report which carefully replied to the question, "Cannot an adequate ministry be better provided, without the systematic aid of the Church as a body, than with it?" by stating the necessity and expediency of aiding Candidates, and resolved "that the Board of Education is entitled to the increased confidence and support of all our churches as a wisely and efficiently administered agency for conducting our educational work."‡

How may Candidates receive aid from the Board?

"The Board of Education shall only receive and aid Candidates for the ministry of the gospel upon the recommendation of a Presbytery of the Church; and the Presbytery is responsible for their examination, subsequent care and the designation of the amount of aid to be granted to them, within the limits set by the General Assembly." The responsibility really rests on the Presbytery. "No Candidate shall be received by the Board who has not

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 353–360.

† *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 246.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1879*, pp. 602–604. See p. 400.

been a member of the Presbyterian Church or some closely-related body for at least one year, who has not been recommended to the Presbytery by the Session of the church of which he is a member, and who is not sufficiently advanced in study to enter college, except in extraordinary cases."* In 1872 the Assembly recommended that the Candidate shall have passed his classical studies for an academic year, in ordinary cases, before he can be helped by the Board.† In 1877 it was suggested to Presbyteries to require a knowledge of the "Shorter Catechism."‡ The Presbyteries are constantly enjoined to be very careful in their recommendations as to piety, motives, talents, health, promise of efficiency, habits, need, and success in study. These recommendations must be renewed every year, in connection with others from the Sessions of the churches to which they severally belong. It is also necessary that a report be received from the Professors under whom they study as to their standing and conduct. "If at any time there be discovered in a student such defect in capacity, diligence, and especially in piety, as would render his introduction into the ministry a doubtful measure, it shall be considered the sacred duty of the Presbytery to cease to recommend him, and that of the Board to withdraw its appropriations."§ In 1878 this rule was modified, so as to read that in such a case "it shall be the sacred duty of the Board to communicate without delay the information received to the Education Committee of his Presbytery; and if on careful inquiry on the part of the Presbytery no satisfactory explanation of the defect can be

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 361. † *Ibid.*, p. 366.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 535. See p. 320.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 362, 363.

obtained, or if no response be received by the Board from the Presbytery or from their Committee on Education, within the current quarter, it shall be the duty of the Board to withdraw their aid altogether."* The Board must consider the recommendations and reports, and may grant the appropriation as it may be able. These appropriations are "not to be regarded as a loan to be refunded by those who comply with these rules and regularly enter the ministry, but as a cheerful contribution to facilitate and expedite their preparation for it." But the appropriation shall be refunded with interest if any "student fail to enter on or continue in the work of the ministry, unless he can make it appear that he is providentially prevented; if he cease to adhere to the standards of the Presbyterian Church; if he change his place of study contrary to the directions of his Presbytery, or continue to prosecute his studies at an institution not approved by it or by the Board; or withdraw his connection from the Church of which this Board is the organ without furnishing a satisfactory reason." "The annual appropriations to Candidates shall not in ordinary circumstances exceed one hundred and fifty dollars to theological or one hundred and twenty dollars to collegiate students, and not more than one hundred dollars to extraordinary cases in the preparatory course."† In 1879 the Assembly resolved, (1) "That the theological seminaries be earnestly requested to continue their diligent attention to the whole subject of appropriations to students; that special care be taken that no one shall receive more than is requisite for his necessary expenses; that the sum appropriated to the several students shall be determined by a separate vote of the faculty on each case, . . . and reported at the end of the

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 49. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 362.

term to the Board of Trustees." (2) "That each theological seminary be respectfully requested to report annually to the General Assembly how many students have been aided by scholarship funds, and how many of these have also received aid from the Board, and what is the maximum that has been given to any one student." (3) "That hereafter the appropriations of the Board be styled Scholarships." (The O. S. Assembly allowed this in 1851.*) (4) "That the Board of Education shall determine before each college and seminary year, as far as practicable, the exact amount the Board will pay to each student the ensuing year, and that the first payment be made in the month of October, . . . and all subsequent payments shall be made regularly at such intervals as may be determined by the Board." (5) "That the Presbyteries be enjoined . . . to exercise increased care in recommending students in the first instance to the Board of Education for aid, and also in the renewing of such applications from year to year; also, that they . . . be requested to endeavor, through the Standing Committee of the Presbytery on Education, to assist such students as may desire it, by securing for them proper remunerative missionary or parochial employment during vacations."† In 1880 the Assembly resolved that the Board be instructed "to withhold all support from students who stand below the medium mark in the respective educational institutions, unless special and satisfactory reasons are shown to the Board for an exception;" "that, as the struggle of the college student is as severe as that of the student in the theological seminary, the Assembly approves of an equal pecuniary apportionment to each."‡ In 1881

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 402. † *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 562.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1880*, p. 71.

the Assembly declared that the assistance granted to Candidates in the preparatory course should be one hundred dollars, and to those in colleges and in the seminaries should be one hundred and fifty dollars, as soon as the funds of the Board shall warrant it. "We deem it timely for the Assembly to declare that this Church will henceforth aid all the young men of suitable and consecrated gifts who may look to us for aid on their way to the ministry."* Appendix, p. 534.

What information does the Board require before granting an appropriation?

"Definite answers, by direction of the Assembly, will invariably be required by the Board: What is the Candidate's name? age? residence? Is the Presbytery satisfied as to his experimental piety? as to his motives for entering the ministry? as to his talents? as to his health? as to his promise of practical efficiency? Is he free from expensive and injurious habits? What is the lowest amount of pecuniary aid required to supplement his really necessary expenses till the end of the present collegiate year? Of what congregation is he a member? How long has he been in the communion of the Church? What is his stage of study? Where engaged at present? Give the name of a responsible person (usually a member of the faculty of the institution or his Pastor) through whom the appropriations can be sent."† To these another question has been added concerning his ability to repeat the "Shorter Catechism."‡

What are the duties of Candidates?

"The young brethren who look to this work are earnestly and affectionately reminded that all intellectual ac-

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 543. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 361.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 535. See p. 320.

quisitions are of little value without the cultivation of piety, and that they are expected and required to pay special attention to the practical duties of religion, such as reading the Scriptures, secret prayer and meditation, occasional acts of special consecration of themselves to Christ and to his service as their Redeemer and as the Lord of all; attendance on regular meetings on the Sabbath and during the week; endeavors to promote the salvation of others; and the exhibition at all times of a pious and consistent example." They should report, soon after the meeting of the Assembly, to the Presbyterial Education Committee of their progress, wants and prospects, and they should carefully observe all the rules of the Board. If a student finds it necessary to relinquish study for a time, he should give notice to the Board.*

Where may Candidates study?

In 1879 the Assembly directed "the Board of Education to require the Candidates hereafter received under their care to pursue their collegiate studies, except in very extraordinary cases, in institutions that sympathize with the doctrinal teachings of our Church."† This subject early engaged the attention of our Church. In 1739 the Synod of Philadelphia took steps to establish a school or seminary of learning, but the effort failed. In 1744 the Synod opened a free school, to be sustained by annual collections in the churches, its special object being to prepare young men for the ministry. In 1752 the Synod of New York ordered collections for the College of New Jersey, and the next year sent a delegation to Scotland for aid, with an address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The chief object of the college is

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 363.

† *Minutes G. A 1879*, p. 600. See p. 317.

stated to be the promoting of the interest of learning and religion in this infant country, and the increase of a sound educated ministry.* In 1790 the Synod of Virginia recommended the establishment of two general institutions of learning, which afterward developed into Washington College in Virginia, and Jefferson College in Pennsylvania. These schools were also "for the purpose of educating young men for the ministry." Such was the origin of several other colleges.†

The theological training of Candidates must be under the direction of the Presbytery. No one shall be licensed "unless, after his having completed the usual course of academical studies, he shall have studied divinity at least two years under some approved divine or Professor of theology."‡ At first Candidates studied with their Pastor or some other Minister, often living in the Minister's house, and were gradually introduced by him into parish-work. But it was early found that a Professor of theology was much needed. In 1761 an effort was made to secure a competent Professor, and a provisional arrangement was made. In 1809 plans were proposed for the establishment of a theological seminary, which in 1812 resulted in the formation of one at Princeton, N. J., which was accommodated in the college buildings until suitable ones could be erected.§ In 1838 the O. S. Assembly resolved "that Presbyteries be and they hereby are enjoined to see that their Candidates for the ministry prosecute their studies only at such theological seminaries or with such divines as are thus approved and recognized by the Presbyterian Church as sound in faith and

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 388–396.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 403–406. See p. 411.

‡ See p. 321.

§ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 426–438; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 369–375.

attached to our ecclesiastical order and forms of worship as laid down in the accredited standards of our Church." * At the reunion the Assembly ordered that "every student is required, except in unusual circumstances and with the expressed permission of his Presbytery, to pursue a thorough course of study preparatory to that of theology, and when prepared to pursue a three years' course of theological studies in a seminary connected with the Presbyterian Church; and no work of preaching is to be allowed to interfere with the diligent and faithful prosecution of his prescribed studies until their close." †

What theological seminaries are approved by the General Assembly?

The seminaries recognized and approved by the General Assembly are—

1. The Princeton Theological Seminary, founded by the Assembly in 1812. Appendix, p. 535.

2. The Auburn Theological Seminary, established by certain Presbyteries in Central and Western New York in 1819.

3. The Western Theological Seminary, at Allegheny, founded by the Assembly in 1825.

4. The Lane Seminary, at Cincinnati, founded 1829 by individuals, members of the Presbyterian Church, but not under any ecclesiastical control.

5. The Union Theological Seminary, in New York, founded by individuals, and not under any ecclesiastical control, in 1836.

6. The Danville Theological Seminary, founded by the O. S. Assembly in 1853. Appendix, p. 535.

7. The Seminary of the North-west, in Chicago, Ill. It was originally "The Indiana Theological Seminary,"

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 778. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 362.

at South Hanover, founded by the Synod of Indiana in 1830. It was removed to New Albany in 1840, and placed under the care of two, and afterward of seven, Western Synods. It was offered to the O. S. Assembly in 1853, but was not received until 1859, when it was removed to Chicago and called the North-western Theological Seminary. Appendix, p. 536.

8. German Theological School, at Newark, N. J. It was organized by the Presbytery of Newark, but reorganized in 1871 according to the plan proposed by the General Assembly, and taken under its care.

9. German Theological School of the North-west, at Dubuque, Iowa. It was an individual enterprise, with the sympathy and personal support of the Presbyteries of Dubuque and Dane. It was reorganized in 1871 according to the plan proposed by the General Assembly, and taken under its care.

10. Lincoln University, Theological Department, at Oxford, Pa. It was originally called the Ashmun Institute, and was designed for the education of colored men, and the preparation of some, thus educated, for the ministry. In 1871 the theological department was reorganized and placed under the care of the General Assembly.

11. San Francisco Seminary, organized by the Synod of the Pacific in 1871, and received under the care of the General Assembly in 1872.

12. Blackburn University, at Carlinville, Ill. It was founded by Rev. Gideon Blackburn, D.D., in 1838. In 1857 it was incorporated as Blackburn Theological Seminary. In 1867 it was organized as a university. In 1872 it was received under the care of the General Assembly, having adopted the plan proposed by that body in 1870.*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 383–396.

13. Biddle University, at Charlotte, N. C. In 1867 the Presbytery of Catawba, through the liberality of Mrs. H. J. Biddle of Philadelphia, established the Biddle Memorial Institute, to train colored men to be Catechists, Teachers and Ministers. It was under the care of the Committee on Freedmen, who chose its Professors. In 1875 it was taken under the care of the General Assembly. In 1876 a new charter was obtained for it under the name of the Biddle University.*

What control has the Assembly over these seminaries?

Before the reunion several of these seminaries were under the direct control of the General Assembly, and their Professors were elected by that body. Some were under the supervision of Synods or Presbyteries, the Professors being elected by their Boards of Commissioners or Directors. Others were under no ecclesiastical control. In 1870 it was agreed that "those theological seminaries that are now under the Assembly may, if their Boards of Direction so elect, be transferred to the watch and care of one or more of the adjacent Synods; and the other seminaries are advised to introduce, as far as may be, into their constitutions the principle of synodical or Assembly supervision, in which case they shall be entitled to an official recognition and approbation on the part of the General Assembly."†

The following plan was adopted:

1. "Accepting the offer so generously made by the Theological Seminary in New York—a seminary independent hitherto of all direct ecclesiastical control—to invest the General Assembly with the right of veto in the election of Professors in that institution, the Assem-

* *Minutes G. A. 1867*, p. 447; *1875*, p. 588; *1880*, pp. 93–130.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 92.

bly would invite all those theological seminaries not now under the control of the General Assembly to adopt at their earliest convenience the same rule and method, to the end that throughout the whole Presbyterian Church there may be uniform and complete confidence in those entrusted with the training of our Candidates for the ministry."

2. "The several Boards of Directors of those seminaries which are now under the control of the General Assembly shall be authorized to elect, suspend and displace the Professors of the seminaries under their care, subject in all cases to the veto of the General Assembly, to whom they shall annually make a full report of their proceedings, and to whom their minutes shall be submitted whenever the Assembly shall require them to be produced. These Boards shall further be authorized to fix the salaries of the Professors and to fill their own vacancies, subject in all cases to the veto of the Assembly." "If not vetoed by that (the next) Assembly, the election shall be regarded as complete, according to the plan ratified by the Assembly of 1870."* App., p. 536.

What qualifications are required for reception to the seminaries?

The plan of the seminaries requires that "every student applying for admission to the theological seminary shall produce satisfactory testimonials that he possesses good natural talents, and is of a prudent and discreet deportment; that he is in full communion with some regular church; that he has passed through a regular course of academical study, or, wanting this, he shall submit himself to an examination in regard to the branches of literature taught in such a course."† In 1878 it was re-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 386; *Minutes G. A. 1871*, p. 581. See p. 265.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 379.

solved, "That in the judgment of this Assembly it is highly desirable that some knowledge of the Hebrew language should be required of the students entering our theological seminaries—at least that they should be thoroughly grounded in the elements of that language. And the Assembly therefore recommend the officers of our seminaries to take such steps as may in their judgment secure this end." *

May Candidates select a seminary in which to study, and may they leave it at pleasure?

"Our Presbyteries should in all cases inquire into and advise as to the choice by the Candidate of the institution at which he will pursue his studies, and that no Candidate thus selecting his institution should leave it for another without the consent of his Presbytery." †

What is license?

It is a part of trial, authority given by Presbytery to Probationers to preach the gospel for a limited time, that their gifts may be tested, and that the Presbyteries may make "a competent trial of their talents, and, receiving from the churches a good report, they may in due time ordain them to the sacred office." ‡

By what Presbytery may a Candidate be licensed?

By the one "to which he naturally belongs" and under which he has studied, unless he be transferred to some other Presbytery; and he should be so transferred if he proposes to labor in the bounds of that Presbytery. It is irregular for a Candidate to go into another denomination or any other than our own Presbyteries to obtain a license and return to labor in our bounds. §

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p 95.
† *Ibid., 1877*, p. 535.
‡ See pp. 195, 299–302.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 365.

Is a liberal education necessary for licensure?

"*It is recommended that the Candidate shall also be required to produce a diploma of bachelor or master of arts from some college or university, or at least authentic testimonials of his having gone through a regular course of learning.*" The Assembly has always insisted on this, although in certain cases it has waived this qualification, as in 1758 the Synod permitted the reception of a Welsh Licentiate, and in 1807 the Assembly authorized the Presbytery of Philadelphia to license a colored Candidate.* In 1876 the Trustees of Lincoln University overtured the Assembly in regard to the licensure and aid of young colored men seeking the ministry, and received the following answer: "The General Assembly has no authority to modify the regulations of our 'Form of Government' in respect to the qualifications of Licentiates. At the same time the Assembly recognizes the propriety of the exercise by the Presbyteries of a wise discretion in their administration of the functions entrusted to them by the Church, in view of the great work to be done by our Church among the colored people in this country. The Assembly specially accords such discretion to those Presbyteries which are providentially brought into special relations to that work; meanwhile, in view of the experience of several years, enjoining upon such Presbyteries the obligation to take great care lest any incompetent or unworthy men be admitted into the ministry of our Church."†

IV. Why is a thorough education necessary?

"*Because it is highly reproachful to religion, and dangerous to the Church, to entrust the holy ministry to weak and ignorant men.*"

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 368. † *Minutes G. A. 1876*, p. 71.

In what studies shall the Presbytery examine the Candidates?

"*The Presbytery shall try each Candidate—*

1. "*As to his knowledge of the Latin language and the original languages in which the Holy Scriptures were written.*" Often the college diploma is received as evidence of his knowledge of Latin and Greek.

2. "*They shall also examine him on the arts and sciences.*" A college diploma is generally considered sufficient evidence.

3. "*On theology, natural and revealed.*"

4. "*On ecclesiastical history.*"

5. "*On the sacraments and church government.*"

These examinations are generally conducted in open Presbytery by standing committees on examinations, all the members, however, having the privilege of asking questions. The examinations may be arrested at any time by vote. Sometimes the Presbytery, if large, pressed with business and having a large number of Candidates under their charge, order that the Standing Committee on Examinations shall carefully examine all Candidates, and report in detail the result to Presbytery for final action.*

What written pieces are required?

"*And in order to make trial of his talents to explain and vindicate, and practically to enforce, the doctrines of the gospel, the Presbytery shall require of him—*

1. "*A Latin exegesis on some common head in divinity.*"

2. "*A critical exercise, in which the Candidate shall give a specimen of his taste and judgment in sacred criticism, presenting an explication of the original text, stating its*

* See p. 191.

connection, illustrating its force and beauties, removing its difficulties, and solving any important questions which it may present."

3. *"A lecture or exposition of several verses of Scripture,"* and—

4. *"A popular sermon."*

Before these are approved as parts of trial they are generally handed to committees for examination, especially the Latin exegesis and the critical exercise. Sometimes the Presbytery require them all to be read before the body or a congregation.

V. May the Presbytery demand further trials?

"These or other similar exercises, at the discretion of the Presbytery, shall be exhibited until they shall have obtained satisfaction as to the Candidate's piety, literature and aptness to teach in the churches. The lecture and popular sermon, if the Presbytery think proper, may be delivered in the presence of a congregation." Formerly this was generally done, and in many places the custom is continued. But in the larger Presbyteries the Candidate is required to read or deliver before the body the sermon, at least in part, that they may have some idea of his qualifications as a public speaker.

Is a knowledge of the Catechisms necessary?

In 1868 the O. S. Assembly required the Presbyteries "to see that the Candidates for licensure be well versed in the Catechisms and well furnished with Scripture proof-texts."* In 1880 it was "recommended that the directors of the theological seminaries under the care of the Assembly be requested to see to it, that all Candidates for the Presbyterian ministry under their instruction be prepared for an annual examination in the 'Westminster

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 398. See p. 307.

Shorter Catechism.'" This was reiterated the next year.*

How are the examinations and pieces to be approved?

After the various parts of trials are completed to the satisfaction of Presbytery the Candidate retires, and the roll is called to give every member the opportunity to express his opinion. The roll is generally called a second time for the vote, to sustain these parts of trial. The question is then put, Shall the Candidate be licensed to preach the gospel?

VI. When may a Candidate be licensed?

"*That the most effectual measures may be taken to guard against the admission of insufficient men into the sacred office, it is recommended that no Candidate, except in extraordinary cases, be licensed, unless, after his having completed the usual course of academical studies, he shall have studied divinity at least two years under some approved divine or Professor of Theology.*" Attempts have several times been made to increase the required term to three years. In 1792 the Assembly declared that the rule adopted by the Synod of New York and New Jersey, requiring three years, was unconstitutional. In 1792, 1835 and 1836 overtures were sent to the Presbyteries proposing that the change be made in the constitution. In 1836 and 1837 a majority of the Presbyteries which answered voted in favor of the change, but not a majority of the whole number. The Assembly has, however, often declared "that it is highly important that theological students continue the full time of three years in the seminary, and complete the whole course of study prescribed in the plan," and that "it is in general highly inexpedient for Candidates for the ministry to apply for licensure at

* *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 63; *1881*, p. 577.

such a period of their course of study as would prevent them from finishing the three years' plan of studies." The O. S. Assembly in 1844 declared "that the rule of the Board of Education (requiring a pledge of three years' study) does not conflict with the constitution." * In 1863 the O. S. Assembly "recommended, in view of the great importance of a thorough course of theological study, that the Presbyteries exercise great care and prudence in regard to the licensing of Candidates, and that in ordinary cases this be postponed until the completion of the theological course, that their undivided attention may be given to the prosecution of their studies while in the seminary." † In 1876 the Assembly replied to an overture from the Lincoln University in regard to colored Candidates, according certain discretion. ‡

How long is the course of study in the seminaries?

They all have adopted a three-year course. § In 1865 the O. S. Assembly approved the extension of the course in the Princeton Seminary to four years, agreeably to the prayer of the Professors communicated through the Directors, and ordered that the plan be changed so as to read, "The period of continuance in the Theological Seminary shall in no case be less than four years previous to an examination for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity." ‖ But the next year a modification was made at the request of the faculty, and because of remonstrances from several Presbyteries, and the Assembly "sanctioned the adoption by any or all of our seminaries of a course of studies to be pursued, purely at the option of students, during a fourth year, not impairing the three years' course

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 398, 399.
† *Minutes G. A. 1863*, p. 19.
‡ See p. 318.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 379.
‖ *Minutes G. A. 1865*, p. 573.

as heretofore pursued, provided no increase of the number of teachers shall be asked on this account. And no distinctive degree or title shall be conferred on those electing to pursue the fourth year's course, save a certificate similar to that now authorized for the three years' course."* This is the plan generally adopted in the seminaries.

May a Candidate be licensed to preach without expecting to be ordained?

"The General Assembly cannot sanction the practice of licensure as a means to attain a higher measure of usefulness merely, without aiming to reach ordination, as this would be virtually to make two grades of preaching officers."†

May a Candidate preach without a license?

It is certainly contrary to the design of this chapter, and dangerous to the churches. Those who teach and preach should be under the supervision of the church courts. The Assembly has often expressed disapproval of those who preach without license.‡ Yet Candidates are encouraged to try their gifts, under the direction of their Pastors or of the Presbytery, during the seminary vacations, in prayer-meetings and even in church services, and in destitute places as colporteurs.§ Sometimes application is made to Presbytery for a temporary license to preach during the second vacation within the bounds of the Presbytery and under the supervision of some Pastor.‖

VII. How is the Candidate to be licensed?

"If the Presbytery be satisfied with his trials, they shall then proceed to license him in the following manner: The

* *Minutes G. A. 1866*, p. 46. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 401.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 352. § See p. 422. ‖ See p. 80.

Moderator shall propose to him the following questions," the Candidate standing before the Moderator in the presence of the Presbytery, and often of a congregation:

1. *"Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?"*

2. *"Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?"*

3. *"Do you promise to study the peace, unity and purity of the Church?"*

4. *"Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this Presbytery, or of any other Presbytery in the bounds of which you may be called?"*

VIII. *"The Candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, and the Moderator having offered up a prayer suitable to the occasion, he shall address himself to the Candidate to the following purpose,"* the members of Presbytery standing: *"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which he hath given to the Church for its edification, we do license you to preach the gospel wherever God in his providence may call you; and for this purpose may the blessing of God rest upon you, and may the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen."*

Is it necessary that he assent to the standards?

Such is the requirement of this section, and his licensure certifies to the fact. In 1730 the Synod declared unanimously that Intrants or Candidates must receive and adopt the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, with the Directory, at their admission, in the same manner and as fully as the members of Synod. This was enforced in 1734, in 1758 and 1825, and has ever since been required.*

* *Presbyterian Digest,* pp. 46, 49, 55, 57, 411.

What record shall be made?

"A record shall be made of the licensure in the following or like form, viz.:

"At ———, the — day of ———, the Presbytery of ——— having received testimonials in favor of ——— ———, of his having gone through a regular course of literature, of his good moral character, and of his being in the communion of the Church, proceeded to take the usual parts of trial for his licensure; and he having given satisfaction as to his accomplishments in literature, as to his experimental acquaintance with religion, and as to his proficiency in divinity and other studies, the Presbytery did, and hereby do, express their approbation of all these parts of trial; and he having adopted the Confession of Faith of this Church, and satisfactorily answered the questions appointed to be put to Candidates to be licensed, the Presbytery did, and hereby do, license him, the said ——— ———, to preach the gospel of Christ, as a Probationer for the holy ministry, within the bounds of this Presbytery, or wherever else he shall be orderly called."

A copy of this record, or some similar certificate of his licensure, signed by the Moderator and Stated Clerk, should be handed to the Licentiate as a certification to the church of his authority to preach.

What powers have Licentiates?

They are licensed to preach the gospel as part of their probation for the ministry. They belong to the laity, and are subject to the Session. "Although Candidates and Licentiates are in training for the gospel ministry, and in consequence of this are placed under the care of Presbyteries, and in certain respects become immediately responsible to them, yet they are to be regarded as belonging to the order of the laity till they receive ordination to the whole

work of the gospel ministry."* They cannot administer the sacraments.† Nor pronounce the benediction.‡ Nor solemnize marriage. Yet the O. S. Assembly in 1844 resolved that they "do not consider them as violating any rules of the Church by solemnizing marriages in those States where the civil laws expressly authorize them to do it."§ They have no seat or voice in Session or any church court, yet, as part of their preparation, they should be present as frequently as possible.‖ If acting as Stated Supplies of churches, they are not to be regarded as Pastors, nor to sit as Moderators in the Session or congregational meetings.¶

IX. May a Candidate be transferred from one Presbytery to another?

"*When any Candidate for licensure shall have occasion while his trials are going on to remove from the bounds of his own Presbytery into those of another, it shall be considered as regular for the latter Presbytery, on his producing proper testimonials from the former, to take up his trials at the point at which they were left, and conduct them to a conclusion in the same manner as if they had been commenced by themselves.*" This implies that he receives a regular dismissal from the Presbytery which began his examinations. It is not lawful for him to place himself under the care of a Presbytery while under the care of another, especially after being refused a license.**

X. How may a Licentiate be transferred?

"*In like manner, when any Candidate after licensure*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 402. See p. 130.

† *Directory for Worship*, chs. vii. and viii. See pp. 83, 90.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 108. See p. 114.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 402. See p. 95.

‖ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 86. ¶ See p. 127.

** *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 144. See p. 208.

shall, by the permission of his Presbytery, remove without its limits, an extract of the record of his licensure, accompanied with a presbyterial recommendation, signed by the Clerk, shall be his testimonials to the Presbytery under whose care he shall come."

XI. For how long a time may a Candidate be licensed?

The constitution leaves it indefinite; the Presbytery was therefore at liberty to recall the license at any time when satisfied that the preaching is not to the edification of the churches. The Assembly in 1872 adopted the following rule: Every license shall expire at the end of four years, unless the Licentiate during that period be called to permanent labor in the Church. The Presbytery may extend the license for one year.* In 1874 this was explained to mean that all licenses then in force expired in four years from the date of that action.†

May a license be renewed?

There are cases in which this seems proper, as after restoration to health, return from foreign travel, resuming study after being engaged for a time in teaching or secular employments, or even restoration after church discipline. The Assembly seems to refer to such cases among others in its deliverance, "that the Assembly has no power over the functions of the Presbytery in granting and continuing licenses, save that of review and control."‡

May a license be recalled?

"*When a Licentiate shall have been preaching for a considerable time, and his services do not appear edifying to the churches, the Presbytery may, if they think proper, recall his license;*" or whenever it is discovered that the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 401.

† *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 81. See p. 195. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

Candidate is unfit for the ministry; or when charged with immorality, in which case the Presbytery should not only deprive him of his license, but also remit him to the Session for further discipline; or whenever the Presbytery is dissatisfied with his conduct or preaching.*

Where may a Licentiate preach?

He may preach "within the bounds of this Presbytery, or wherever else he shall be orderly called;" such is the wording of his license. He is under the care of Presbytery, which should therefore see that he is properly employed within their bounds in vacant churches or missionary stations; or, with the approbation of Presbytery, he may labor elsewhere, or enter the service of the Boards of the Church.

How are Candidates licensed in other churches?

See pp. 196, 357.

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE ELECTION AND ORDINATION OF BISHOPS OR PASTORS, AND EVANGELISTS.

I. What is a vacant church?

Every congregation without a Pastor is to be regarded as a vacant church, though it may have a Stated Supply and be regularly ministered to by the Pastor of another church.†

How is a vacant church to be ministered unto?

The Session of a vacant church, under its responsibility to Presbytery, must take charge of the pulpit and determine who shall preach therein. Permission should be

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 402. † See p. 181.

asked of Presbytery for leave to supply the pulpit, and the Session should invite those who are sent to them recommended by Presbytery.* The Session should "use their best endeavors to promote the settlement of a Pastor in the speediest manner possible consistently with the peace, order and edification of the congregation; and it is the privilege of the people or any portion of them to complain to the Presbytery when they think that the Session, after being suitably requested, neglect or refuse to convene the congregation to elect a Pastor."† If it be inconvenient or impossible to procure a Minister on any Sabbath, the services should be conducted by the Session according to "Form of Government," ch. xxi.‡

How may a Session procure a Pastor?

There are several methods.

1. The Presbytery or Pastors or other persons may recommend certain Licentiates and Ministers as suitable Candidates. These the Session may invite in turn to preach one or more Sabbaths, until the congregation appear prepared to unite on one for their Pastor. The Licentiates and Ministers thus presented to the church are styled Candidates for the pulpit. This method is called "candidating." It is in very general use, but has many serious objections, placing the Minister in a disadvantageous position, and failing to give the church a fair opportunity to judge of his qualifications, and often destroying the harmony of the congregation.

2. A second may be called "the Stated-Supply plan." The Session may select from those recommended to them, or of whom they have some knowledge, one who in their judgment gives promise of usefulness, and may engage him

* *Directory of Worship*, ch. vi., sect. vi. See p. 212.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 403. ‡ See p. 505.

as a Stated Supply for a few months or a year. This may be done with the expressed intention of settlement as Pastor at the end of the time if agreeable to both parties. This also has objections: Ministers and Licentiates do not like so long a period of uncertainty and trial, and the church cannot receive much edification while it continues.

3. Another plan is "by committee." The Session, dreading the evils of the above plans, may supply the pulpit by inviting settled Pastors, Professors or other Ministers who cannot be regarded as Candidates to preach for them while the church is vacant. A meeting of the congregation is called, and a committee, composed of the Session or a part of it and of certain persons of the congregation, is appointed to select a Pastor. The congregation may indeed veto their choice, but it is generally understood that the decision of the committee shall be accepted by the church. Recommendations are received, and the committee visit different churches and hear the Pastors in their ordinary ministrations, and become acquainted with their work and personal character. When they are satisfied that they have found a Minister who will be acceptable to the congregation, they may converse with him on the subject, and if he be willing to consider their offer, he may desire to visit the church and preach there before giving a final answer. The committee render their report to the congregation, and the call is voted and prepared for the action of Presbytery. Even a Licentiate may be heard by this method: the committee may request some neighboring Pastor to invite him to preach in his pulpit, or they may visit the church to which he has been sent to labor by the Presbytery. This method is often employed by the

more important churches where Ministers of reputation and experience are sought. It is growing in favor, having many decided advantages, affording as it does to Ministers and churches better opportunities of forming correct judgments. A modified form of this plan is sometimes employed. The congregation may have a small or inexperienced Session, and, possessing great confidence in their former Pastor or some other Minister, may appoint him the committee, with like powers as above, to select a Pastor for them. This, however, places great responsibility upon the Minister.

Our book does not prescribe the plan to be pursued, but it assumes that the congregation as such, or by their chosen representatives, shall have ample opportunity to be "satisfied with his ministerial qualifications" and have some experience of his labors before they shall make out a call for a Pastor.* *"When any Probationer shall have preached so much to the satisfaction of any congregation as that the people appear prepared to elect a Pastor, the Session shall take measures to convene them for this purpose."*

May several Candidates appear before the congregation?

This seems in most cases unavoidable. Some Candidates do not make any marked impression upon the people, and the Session do not deem it advisable to invite them again. Several may therefore be heard more or less favorably before the church is ready to make out a call. The Session should be careful in their selection of Candidates, and should restrict the number as much as possible, to prevent divisions in the church. This section implies that when a Probationer is a Candidate, he should be for some time the prominent, if not the

*See p. 338.

only, Candidate before the meeting is called to elect a Pastor.

Who may call a meeting of the congregation to elect a Pastor?

"*The Session shall take measures to convene them for this purpose.*" They shall call the meeting when "*the people appear prepared to elect a Pastor.*" "*And it shall always be the duty of the Session to convene them when a majority of the persons entitled to vote in the case shall by a petition request that a meeting be called.*" The Session may deem it ill-advised to call the meeting at the time, because of great excitement, undue haste, want of sufficient knowledge of the Candidate, or a conviction that the Candidate is unfit for the position. In such cases the Session may call the meeting, depending upon the reasonableness of the congregation to listen to their advice and adjourn the election. Or they may refuse to call it, confident that the Presbytery will sustain them in such a course when the matter comes before that body by complaint; for the people or any portion of them have the privilege of complaining if "the Session, after being suitably requested, neglect or refuse to convene the congregation." The Presbytery is required "to prevent all undue delay by the Session or the people," and "to prevent all precipitancy in the settlement of any Minister, or the adoption of any system of proceedings in the congregation inconsistent with the real and permanent edification of the people." * The Assembly of 1877 "would deprecate undue haste in the consummation of pastoral ties, as itself prophetic of speedy dissolution." "Relationships designed to be lasting must be carefully considered and prayerfully entered into." †

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 403. † *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 543.

"But in all cases the meeting must be called by the Session or by some higher court."*

II. Who shall Moderate the congregational meeting?

"*The Session shall solicit the presence and counsel of some neighboring Minister to assist them in conducting the election contemplated, unless highly inconvenient on account of distance, in which case they may proceed without such assistance.*" Where the Presbytery has appointed a Minister to be the Moderator of the Session of the vacant church, he should preside over the congregational meeting. If another Minister is called in ("*some neighboring Minister*"), he must be of the same Presbytery. If no Minister can be procured, the Elder chosen by the Session as a temporary Moderator should preside. And in all cases the Clerk of Session is by virtue of his office Clerk of the meeting.† If any exceptions be taken from the ruling of the Moderator, they must be laid before the Presbytery, which is the reviewing court.†

III. How shall the congregational meeting be called?

"*On a Lord's day, immediately after public worship, it shall be intimated from the pulpit that all the members of that congregation are requested to meet on ——— ensuing at the church, or usual place for holding public worship, then and there, if it be agreeable to them, to proceed to the election of a Pastor for that congregation.*" There should be ample time given, that all may be informed of the proposed meeting. It is not unusual to give ten days' notice (the time specified in the "Book of Discipline" for citations, etc.); yet frequently the meeting is held the same week. According to Presbyterian principles, the election must be directly by the people; it is their

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 338, 403. † See p. 160.

precious and inalienable privilege to elect their own Pastors.*

How are Pastors chosen in other denominations?

In the Episcopal Church and in the Reformed Episcopal Church the Pastor or Rector is elected by the Vestry, which is composed of members of the congregation chosen annually by the parish to manage its temporal affairs. Notice of the election must be sent to the Bishop, together with the acceptance of the Minister.†

In the Methodist Church the Bishop, assisted by the Presiding Elders, at the Annual Conference makes the annual appointments of the Ministers for all the churches. Informal requests are often received from Ministers and church officers, but the Bishop has full power. He may appoint a Minister over the same church for three years in succession, but not for a longer time. There is a strong desire and effort on the part of many to increase the limit to four, or even five, years, but it meets with decided opposition.‡

In Congregational churches two distinct bodies are recognized—the church, which is composed of the communicants; and the society, or parish, as it is sometimes called, which is a self-perpetuating body corporate, holding the title of the property and managing the temporal affairs of the church. When a Pastor is to be chosen these two bodies hold separate meetings, and must unite on the Candidate before he is regarded as elected. The result of their action is laid before a Council of churches called for that purpose, which proceeds to examine the Candidate, approve the call, and install him.§

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 404.

† *Digest of the Canons*, 1878, title i., canon 14, sect. i. See p. 358.

‡ *Discipline*, 1880, p. 105. See p. 361.

§ *Congregational Manual*, pp. 6, 10, 21, 39, 42. See pp. 37, 359.

In the Lutheran Church the election is by the people.

IV. How should the congregational meeting to elect a Pastor be opened?

"*On the day appointed the Minister invited to preside, if he be present, shall, if it be deemed expedient, preach a sermon.*" If the sermon, for any reason, be omitted, the Moderator generally states the nature and importance of the pastoral office, and gives such other instruction as the congregation may need. Prayer is then offered, asking God's direction and blessing. The minute of the Session calling the meeting is read, and the Moderator "*shall announce to the people that he will immediately proceed to take the votes of the electors of that congregation for a Pastor, if such be their desire; and when this desire shall be expressed by a majority of voices, he shall then proceed to take votes accordingly.*" The desire is generally expressed by resolving "that this congregation do now proceed to elect a Pastor."

Who may vote for a Pastor?

"*No person shall be entitled to vote who refuses to submit to the censures of the church, regularly administered, or who does not contribute his just proportion, according to his own engagements or the rules of that congregation, to all its necessary expenses.*" In 1711 it was agreed "that none shall be allowed to vote for the calling of a Minister but those who shall contribute for the maintenance of him." This section, as adopted by the Synod in 1788, required the electors to be "regular members who punctually pay toward the support of the church." This was omitted in the revision of 1820. In 1863 the O. S. Assembly sustained a complaint against a Synod for limiting the right of voting for a Pastor to communicants, but declared that "the Assembly in this judgment does

not intend to condemn a practice prevalent in some of our congregations in which the right of voting for Pastor is confined to communicants." In 1867 the O. S. Assembly refused to enact a law that none but communicants in good and regular standing shall vote for Pastor.* Each church is therefore left to its own judgment or custom in this matter, save that communicants cannot be deprived of their right to vote, and that other voters must be contributors to the support of the church.† "A church member may not absent himself a longer time (than one year) from the ordinances without a forfeiture of his good standing."‡ In 1879 the Assembly resolved "that it is the judgment of the General Assembly that all members of the church in full communion have the right to vote in the election of Pastor in the congregation with which they are connected, subject to the conditions in section iv., ch. xv., of the "Form of Government."§ The Southern Presbyterian Church declares that "all communicating members in good and regular standing, but no others, are entitled to vote in the election of church officers in the churches to which they are respectively attached."‖

In our churches the custom varies. In some churches only communicants vote; in others, the communicants and the heads of families holding pews; and in others, the communicants and all who contribute to the support of the church.

In Congregational churches each congregation may adopt its own rules as to electors, but the usage is that in the church meetings only the male adult communi-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 404, 405. † *O. S. Minutes 1866*, p. 54.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 627. § *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 630.
‖ *Book of Church Order*, ch. vi., sect. iii., sub-sect. iv.

cants shall vote. In the society there are no minors nor females.*

V. What is the duty of the Moderator after the votes are taken?

The Session as such, or any member of the meeting, may make nominations. The vote thereon is generally taken by ballot, especially if there be more than one Candidate. If the votes are all for the same Candidate, the Moderator shall declare him unanimously elected. If there be a small minority, the Moderator should persuade them to unite with the majority and make the vote unanimous. But "*if it appear that a large minority of the people are averse from the Candidate who has a majority of votes, and cannot be induced to concur in the call, the presiding Minister shall endeavor to dissuade the congregation from prosecuting it further. But if the people be nearly or entirely unanimous, or if the majority shall insist upon their right to call a Pastor, the presiding Minister in that case, after using his utmost endeavors to persuade the congregation to unanimity, shall proceed to draw a call in due form, and to have it subscribed by the electors, certifying at the same time, in writing, the number and circumstances of those who do not concur in the call.*" The call may be ordered at the meeting, and the papers prepared and subscribed afterward. The meeting should be closed, as all ecclesiastical meetings are, with prayer and the benediction. Generally the Moderator offers such congratulations or advice as he judges the people need under the circumstances.

What is done with the record of the meeting?

It is made by the Clerk of Session as Clerk of the meeting. It should not be entered upon the minute-

* See p. 334.

book of Session, for it is not an act of the Session, and Presbyteries frequently condemn the encumbering of the sessional records with extraneous matter. There should be prepared a separate book in which the Clerk should record the minutes of all meetings of the congregation called by the Session.* *"All which proceedings shall be laid before the Presbytery, together with the call."*

VI. In what form shall the call be made?

"The call shall be in the following or like form, viz.:

"The congregation of ——— being, on sufficient grounds, well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, ——— ———, and having good hopes from our past experience of your labors that your ministrations in the gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call and desire you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation; promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. And that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay to you the sum of ———, in regular quarterly (or half-yearly or yearly) payments, during the time of your being and continuing the regular Pastor of this church. In testimony thereof we have respectively subscribed our names, this — day of ——, A. D. ——.

"Attested by A. B., Moderator of the meeting."

This form is generally followed. The exact words are unimportant, provided the facts and pledges are clearly expressed. The blanks are to be filled according to the direct vote of the congregation. The call becomes a legal obligation. This seems necessary, that *"the Pastor may be free from worldly cares and avocations."* The civil courts have often recognized the bind-

* See p. 160.

ing nature of the contract. Sometimes the payments are made monthly, or even weekly.

Is a definite salary requisite?

The form of the call requires a definite salary to be pledged. The Presbytery in approving the call must consider if it be sufficient, and may refuse to place the call in the hands of the Pastor elect, even when he and the congregation are fully satisfied as to the amount of salary, if the Presbytery deem it insufficient.* When the church depends upon the Board of Home Missions for part of the salary, the congregation can pledge only what the church is able of itself to raise: a clause should be added, however, stating how much aid is expected from the Board. Sometimes the agreement is made that the Pastor shall receive a certain proportion of the yearly or weekly income of the church. But this is contrary to the spirit of this section. It gives the Presbytery no opportunity to judge of the sufficiency of the Pastor's support; he is not secured from anxiety, but is left dependent very much upon the changing state of feeling in the congregation; and no legal, definite pledge is given by the people to provide for him. The Assembly have frequently urged upon churches the duty of making liberal provision for the support of their pastors, as in 1811, and by the N. S. Assembly in 1854. The O. S. Assembly in the same year published a report on the subject, which was ordered to be read by the Pastors from the pulpits.†

Should the congregation provide a parsonage?

The use of one is often mentioned in the call as a part of the salary pledged. As early as 1766 the Synod rec-

* See p. 347. *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 408, 549.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 406–408; *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 199–203.

ommended that every Minister be provided "with a glebe, with a convenient house and necessary improvements." Very frequently since has the Assembly repeated the recommendation, as in 1872, when it was resolved that churches be recommended to provide suitable parsonages or manses; that Presbyteries have standing committees on manses; and that Ministers and Elders press the matter on the attention of the people.* The next year the Assembly's Committee on Manses, after three years' labor, was discharged, and the work committed to the Board of Church Erection, "with positive instructions that it be efficiently prosecuted." Little or nothing has, however, been done. In 1876 that Board, having received no money for this object, suggested that it be no longer considered a part of its duty.†

May the salary be afterward increased or diminished?

(1) The call is in the nature of a contract. If any change is made in the terms, it can only be by agreement of parties. The Board of Trustees cannot make any change, for it is not one of the parties. The congregation, called together by the Session, is the one party, and the Pastor is the other. Any change must be by mutual consent. (2) The call differs from an ordinary contract in that the approbation of Presbytery is necessary to give it validity. When fully satisfied, the Presbytery places the call in the hands of the Candidate, and because approving of the terms thereof constitutes the pastoral relation. Any change, therefore, must be sanctioned by the Presbytery. The laws of the different States recognize these principles. The amount of

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 406–409.

† *Minutes G. A. 1873*, p. 539; *1876*, p. 171. See p. 475.

salary in the call is determined by the present ability of the congregation and the circumstances of the Pastor; that amount is pledged to "*free him from worldly cares and avocations.*" But by the increased prosperity of the church or by larger necessary expenses of the Pastor the congregation is obligated to add to the amount pledged, "*that he may be free from worldly cares.*" This is recognized in the verbal pledge in the service of installation,* in which the people promise "to continue to him, while he is their Pastor, that competent worldly maintenance which they have promised, and whatever else they may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among them."† When by mutual consent the salary has been increased, the contract has been changed, even if the consent of the Pastor has been a silent one, merely receiving the additional sum as a regular payment. The congregation cannot, without his concurrence, diminish the amount to that originally promised. The laws of the State have recognized this. The plan of starving out a Pastor by decreasing his salary is as illegal (civilly and ecclesiastically) as it is irreligious. If the congregation feel unable to continue the salary, and the Pastor be unwilling to have any change made, the matter should be referred to Presbytery.‡

In 1854 the O. S. Assembly "recommended to the Elders, Deacons and Trustees of our churches and congregations to meet together on some day before the first of November next, and yearly thereafter, or oftener if necessary, and institute inquiry whether the Minister or Stated Supply is properly and fully supported; and, if they find that he is not so supported, to take immediate

* See p. 353.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. xiii.

‡ See p. 203.

measures to increase his support, and report to their Presbytery at its next meeting."*

How is the salary to be provided for?

Each congregation should adopt a plan for collecting the salary which it deems most advisable. There are several plans now in use:

(1) By subscription. This is often adopted in new, small and feeble churches. Once a year, generally at or after the annual meeting, each person connected with the congregation is expected to subscribe according to his ability, and to pay at certain times during the year. Often this is supplemented by collections taken at each service, and even by other means.

(2) By taxation. In larger and wealthier congregations the pews are owned by and deeded unto the pew-holders. They are obtained in return for subscriptions given for the building of the church, or by subsequent purchase. The owners may occupy them, or rent them to other parties, or sell or bequeath them as any other property. The expenses of the congregation are provided for by a tax laid upon the pews according to their assessed value at the annual meeting of the congregation.

(3) By rental. The congregation under this plan retains full possession and control of the pews. Whatever is given toward the building is given freely. The pews are rented by the Trustees, or persons appointed by the congregation for that purpose, for sums varying according to the position and size, and either for a year or for an indefinite period, according to the wish of the parties. If there be an annual rental, persons occupying pews are generally understood as retaining them unless notice is given to the contrary. Often the amount of rental is de-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 408.

termined at the annual meeting, to meet the estimated expenses of the coming year.

(4) By auction. This is sometimes called "the annual sale of pews;" it is really only a rental by auction. The pews are held only for one year. The committee appointed for that purpose determines the price (rental) of each pew according to its size and position. At a public auction those desiring pews contend for them by bidding above the assessment, the highest bidder obtaining the pew.

(5) By weekly offerings. This is often called the "envelope system." The pews are said to be free, although families and persons are encouraged to occupy the same seats Sabbath after Sabbath. Sometimes the pews are assigned to the different families, not according to their supposed value or the amount to be contributed to the support of the church. At the beginning of the church year each person is expected to subscribe a certain amount. He is furnished with envelopes dated for each Sabbath of the year, and he is expected to return one each Lord's Day, with one fifty-second of the amount thus pledged enclosed therein.

(6) By collection. The pews may be free or assigned to families and individuals for the year. The duty of giving freely on each Lord's Day as the Lord hath prospered them is frequently impressed upon the people, and collections are taken at each service for the expenses of the church, every person being expected to contribute according to his ability at the time.*

Should the Presbytery inquire how the congregations are fulfilling their contracts with the Pastors?

This is part of the duty of Presbytery, often urged by

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 571. See p. 480.

the General Assembly. In 1854 the O. S. Assembly enjoined upon the churches to see that their Ministers were fully and properly supported, and required the Presbyteries to call upon every Minister to answer whether he had preached upon ministerial support. The N. S. Assembly the same year adopted a similar recommendation.* Many Presbyteries, according to a standing rule, demand of the Elder whether his Pastor's salary has been fully and regularly paid during the year.

VII. How may the call be signed?

The members of the congregation may sign it, but it may be subscribed "*by their Elder and Deacons, or by their Trustees, or by a select committee.*" "*But it shall, in such case, be fully certified to the Presbytery by the Minister, or other person who presided, that the persons signing have been appointed for this purpose by a public vote of the congregation, and that the call has been in all other respects prepared as above directed.*" The meeting should also appoint commissioners to appear personally before the Presbytery and prosecute the call.† They should bring the record of the meeting and the call, and be prepared to plead that it be placed in the hands of the Candidate. If the Presbytery be satisfied with the call, they should approve it, and if willing that the Candidate should accept it, they resolve to place it in his hands.

VIII. What does the presentation and acceptance of a call imply?

"*When a call shall be presented to any Minister or Candidate, it shall always be viewed as a sufficient petition from the people for his installment. The acceptance of a call by*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 407, 408.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xv., sect. x. See p. 346.

a Minister or Candidate shall always be considered as a request on his part to be installed at the same time."

Wherein does ordination differ from installation?

Ordination makes a Probationer a Minister—installation makes a Minister a Pastor. A man may be ordained without being installed, but he cannot be installed without ordination. The dissolution of the pastoral relation does not affect his ministerial character.*

May the Candidate be ordained and installed at different times?

"*When a Candidate shall be ordained in consequence of a call from any congregation, the Presbytery shall at the same time, if practicable, install him Pastor of that congregation.*" Installation "may be performed either by the Presbytery or by a committee appointed for that purpose, as may appear most expedient."† Ordination is the act of the Presbytery. In the early history of our churches it was difficult for the Presbytery to be assembled at an isolated church; therefore commissions were sometimes appointed to perform this presbyterial act. The right to do so continues, but it is seldom exercised.‡ When the church calling a Pastor is at a considerable distance from the place of meeting of the Presbytery, or when the Presbytery cannot meet at the time deemed important for the installation service, or when the church cannot entertain the Presbytery, or when it is desirable that the Candidate be at once empowered to administer the sacraments and perform other ministerial acts, the Presbytery may proceed to ordain him when they place the call in his hands, and appoint a committee to install him at such future time as may be deemed convenient. From this

* See p. 203.

† *Form of Government*, ch. xvi., sect. iv.

‡ See pp. 199, 218.

whole chapter it is necessary that installation be in the presence of the congregation.

IX. To what Presbytery shall the call be presented?

"*The call, thus prepared, shall be presented to the Presbytery under whose care the person called shall be.*" The Candidate is generally informed of the action of the congregation, and is thus prepared to reply when the Presbytery approves the call. "*If the Presbytery think it expedient to present the call to him, it may be accordingly presented.*" This is done by the Moderator in the presence of the Presbytery, who, having placed it in his hands, asks if he be ready to accept it. On his assent the Presbytery generally appoint a committee to arrange for his ordination and installation. "*No Minister or Candidate shall receive a call but through the hands of the Presbytery.*" "To facilitate the business and avoid expense and delay, it has become the common usage for the Candidate to obtain a dismission to the Presbytery within whose bounds is the congregation seeking his services; being received by that Presbytery, the proceedings are as in the case of their own Candidates" or Ministers.*

X. How shall the call be presented if the Candidate belongs to another Presbytery?

"*In that case the commissioners, deputed from the congregation to prosecute the call, shall produce to that judicatory a certificate from their own Presbytery, regularly attested by the Moderator and Clerk, that the call has been laid before them, and is in order.*" This process is generally rendered unnecessary,* as the Licentiate laboring for some time in a congregation, or knowing that a call has been prepared, would obtain a dismissal to that Presbytery and be received before the call is presented. Often,

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 409, note.

however, the times of the meeting of the Presbyteries render this impracticable, or the Licentiate may be engaged in some work in the bounds of his own Presbytery which he cannot leave without their judgment and their approval of the call. In such cases the commissioners must take the call, duly attested, to both Presbyteries, either of which may disapprove the call and stop proceedings. The same rule applies to unemployed Ministers, and even to Pastors.* But "*if that Presbytery present the call to their Licentiate, and he be disposed to accept it, they shall then dismiss him from their jurisdiction, and require him to repair to that Presbytery into the bounds of which he is called, and there to submit himself to the usual trials preparatory to ordination.*" The Assembly in 1834 declared that "our 'Form of Government' seems to recognize the right and privilege of each Presbytery to examine and ordain those who come to the pastoral office within their bounds, and who have never before exercised that office;" and therefore "those who propose to pursue the work of their ministry in any section of the country where a Presbytery is already organized" should go as Licentiates, and there receive ordination. This is still more important when the Candidate belongs to another denomination.†

May a Presbytery refuse to put the call into the hands of the Candidate?

This is implied in sect. ix. The power is often exercised by Presbytery.‡ In 1875 the Assembly answered an appeal and complaint of a Minister on the action of a Presbytery refusing to put a call into his hands: "The General Assembly has repeatedly decided that Presbyte-

* See p. 365.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 146.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 548.

ries have discretionary power in such cases, which decisions are clearly in accordance with the 'Form of Government' (see ch. xv., sect. ix.); therefore the appeal and complaint be dismissed."* In 1855 the O. S. Assembly justified a Presbytery in refusing to approve a call because the salary was insufficient, though the church and Minister were fully satisfied.† As early as 1726 it was decided that a congregation is "at liberty to call another Minister in an orderly way as soon as they shall pay up what arrears appear justly due to" their former Pastor.‡

XI. What are the trials for ordination?

"Trials for ordination, especially in a different Presbytery from that in which the Candidate was licensed, shall consist of a careful examination as to his acquaintance with experimental religion; as to his knowledge of philosophy, theology, ecclesiastical history, the Greek and Hebrew languages, and such other branches of learning as to the Presbytery may appear requisite; and as to his knowledge of the constitution, the rules and principles of the government and discipline of the Church."

Wherein should this examination differ from that for license?

It should be a repetition of that examination, by which his qualifications for preaching the gospel were tested.§ As he is now to be invested with authority as Pastor in the Church, special care therefore should be taken to ascertain his knowledge of the principles and the application of church government and discipline.

What is the constitution?

The Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Government, Book of Discipline

* *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 510.
† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 408.
‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 88.
§ See p. 319.

and Directory for Worship. The proof-texts were added by order of the Assembly. There were also notes, which were considered valuable, but had no authority, never having been referred to the Presbyteries; these were discarded in the revision in 1820. The Assembly has frequently reiterated the above definition of the constiution. In 1832 it again declared that "the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly of Divines are included, and do constitute an integral part of the standards of the Church." In 1848 the O. S. Assembly decided that in ordination the question put to the Candidate, "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church?" includes the receiving and adopting the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, "in the same unqualified sense" in which he adopts the other parts of the Confession of Faith. Those who cannot adopt the constitution of the Church cannot be ordained or received as Ministers. In 1825 the Assembly, in answer to an overture respecting those who manifest a decided hostility to creeds, confessions and formularies, determined "that the constitution expressly requires of all Candidates a solemn declaration that they sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture."* At the reunion it was agreed that "the reunion shall be effected on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of our common standards; the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments shall be acknowledged to be the inspired word of God, the infallible rule of faith and practice; the Confession of Faith shall continue to be sincerely received and adopted, as containing the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture, and the Government and Discipline of the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 51–57, 326.

Presbyterian Church in the United States shall be approved as containing the principles and rules of our polity." *

The Southern Church states: "The constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States consists of its doctrinal symbols, embraced in the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, together with the Book of Church Order, which comprises the Form of Government, the Rules of Discipline and the Directory of Worship." †

What written pieces are required?

"*Such written discourse or discourses, founded on the word of God, as to the Presbytery shall seem proper.*" Generally a sermon on an assigned text is read or delivered in whole or in part before the Presbytery, and sometimes before a congregation.

How is the vote taken on these parts of trial?

The Candidate retires, and the roll is called, that each member may express his opinion and vote to sustain or not sustain. If the Presbytery be satisfied, it is resolved that he be ordained to the gospel ministry. The Candidate is recalled, and the result announced to him. A committee is appointed (including one of the Elders from the church) to report arrangements for the ordination and installation. This committee generally reports, recommending the time and the place and the Ministers who shall take part in the service. When the Presbytery adjourns, they do so to meet at the time and place thus determined for the ordination.

Is it proper to appoint the Sabbath as the time for ordination?

The Assembly in 1821 declared that "it is not expe-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 91. See p. 264.

† *Book of Church Order*, ch. vii., sect. i.

dient that ordinations should take place on the Sabbath, yet there may be cases in which urgent and peculiar circumstances may demand them. The Assembly therefore judge it best to leave it to the Presbyteries to act in this concern as they judge that their duty requires." *

Where ought the ordination to take place?

"*If convenient, in that church of which he is to be the Minister.*" † "*It is also recommended that a fast-day be observed in the congregation previous to the day of ordination,*" as when Paul and Barnabas were separated for the foreign missionary work of the Church. (See Acts 13 : 2, 3.)

XII. What are the services preparatory to ordination?

"*The day appointed for ordination being come, and the Presbytery convened,*" after the usual services "*a member of the Presbytery, previously appointed to that duty, shall preach a sermon adapted to the occasion. The same or another member appointed to preside, shall afterwards briefly recite from the pulpit, in the audience of the people, the proceedings of this Presbytery preparatory to this transaction; he shall point out the nature and importance of the ordinance, and endeavor to impress the audience with a proper sense of the solemnity of the transaction.*" The Moderator of Presbytery generally presides. The sermon is often delivered by some Minister invited by Presbytery, not necessarily a member of that body.

What vows are required of the Candidate?

"*Then, addressing himself to the Candidate, he shall propose to him the following questions, viz.:*"

1. "*Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?*"

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 410. † See p. 200.

2. *"Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of faith taught in the Holy Scriptures?"*

3. *"Do you approve of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in these United States?"*

4. *"Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?"*

5. *"Have you been induced, so far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?"*

6. *"Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?"*

7. *"Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a Minister of the gospel, as well as in all relative duties, and in the public duties of your office; endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your conversation, and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God shall make you overseer?"*

8. *"Are you now willing to take charge of the congregation, agreeably to your declaration at accepting their call? and do you promise to discharge the duties of a Pastor to them as God shall give you strength?"*

While the questions are being asked the Candidate should stand near the pulpit and in presence of the congregation. He should answer clearly, that all may hear his vows. He should remain standing while the presiding Minister proposes the questions to the people.

XIII. What promises do the people make?

"The presiding Minister shall propose to the people the

following questions"—they should properly stand while thus addressed:

1. "*Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive* ——— ———, *whom you have called to be your Minister?*"

2. "*Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?*"

3. "*Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labor, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?*"

4. "*And do you engage to continue to him, while he is your Pastor, that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and whatever else you may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among you?*"

XIV. How shall the people answer?

"*By holding up their right hands.*" The assent may be expressed *vivâ voce* if desired, but a formal and solemn ratification of these pledges, which were expressed or implied in the call, is necessary. The people may then resume their seats.

How is the act of ordination performed?

"*The Candidate shall kneel down in the most convenient part of the church,*" and the presiding Minister shall come down from the pulpit and stand in front of the Candidate, while the other Ministers of the Presbytery gather round the Candidate. "*The presiding Minister shall, by prayer and with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, according to the apostolic example, solemnly ordain him to the holy office of the gospel ministry.*"

Who may lay on hands?

The Ministers of the Presbytery, corresponding members as well, and often Ministers of other denominations

who may be present; but these, if convenient, should be first invited to sit as corresponding members (this may be done before the public service). Ruling Elders, though members of the Presbytery, and having responsibility of judging of the qualifications of Candidates, should not take part in the act of ordination. In 1842 the O. S. Assembly recommended "an adherence to the order and, until recently, the uniform practice of our Church—viz., to allow Preaching Elders or Bishops only to engage in that service." The next year and in 1844 it asserted that neither "the constitution nor the practice of our Church," nor "the letter or the spirit of the constitution, or the principles and practice of the Presbyterian churches in Europe or America since the Reformation," "authorize Ruling Elders to impose hands in the ordination of Ministers." In 1860 the N. S. Assembly was equally explicit.*

How is the right hand of fellowship given?

"*Prayer being ended, he*" (the newly-ordained Minister) "*shall rise from his knees, and the Minister who presides shall first, and afterward all the members of the Presbytery in their order, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this purpose, 'We give you the right hand of fellowship to take part of this ministry with us.'*" In this part of the service the Ruling Elders do not take part, notwithstanding the expression, "*all the members of the Presbytery.*" "This language manifestly implies that those welcoming him do themselves occupy places in that ministry to which they welcome him."†

Should the ordination and installation be formally announced?

The presiding Minister "shall solemnly pronounce and declare the said Minister to be regularly constituted the Pas-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 116, 117. † *Ibid.*, p. 117.

tor of that congregation."* The Stated Clerk should also publish in one or more of the religious papers that A. B. has been ordained and installed Pastor of —— church.† The Southern Church prescribes that after the right hand of fellowship be given, "the Moderator shall then say: 'I now pronounce and declare that A. B. has been regularly elected, ordained and installed Pastor of this congregation, agreeably to the word of God and according to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and that as such he is entitled to all support, encouragement, honor and obedience in the Lord. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.'"‡

What charges shall be given?

1. To the Minister, who shall stand conveniently near the pulpit while "*the Minister presiding, or some other appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge in the name of God, to the newly-ordained Bishop.*" (See 2 Tim. 4 : 1, 2.) 2. "And to the people." This is generally given by another Minister appointed for that purpose (Heb. 13 : 7, 16, 17; 1 Thess. 5 : 12, 13). These charges are to urge them "*to persevere in the discharge of their mutual duties.*"

How is the service to be closed?

The presiding Minister or some other "*shall then by prayer recommend them both to the grace of God and his holy keeping, and finally, after singing a psalm, shall dismiss the congregation with the usual blessing.*" The benediction is generally pronounced by the newly-ordained Pastor as his first ministerial act. The service just described includes that of installation as well as of ordination, and

* *Form of Government*, ch. xvi., sect. vi. † See p. 369.

‡ *Book of Church Order*, ch. vi., sect. v., sub-sect. vi.

therefore the last section of the next chapter should be observed: "*It is highly becoming that after the solemnity of installment the heads of families of that congregation who are then present, or at least the Elders and those appointed to take care of the temporal concerns of that church, should come forward to their Pastor, and give him their right hand, in token of cordial reception and affectionate regard.*" This is very generally observed, and does much to strengthen the union just established.* "*And the Presbytery shall duly record the transaction*" and "enroll the name of the new Minister."

What is the standing of the newly-ordained Minister?

By the act of ordination he ceases to be a communicant in a particular church, amenable to Session. He is a member of the Presbytery, and responsible to it. He has "full authority of a Minister of the gospel to preach, to administer the sacraments, to perform the rite of marriage, and to do all other acts and things which properly belong to the sacred office." He has the same standing and authority as all other Ministers.†

XV. May a Candidate be ordained without a call, and without installation over a church?

"*It is sometimes desirable and important that a Candidate who has not received a call to be a Pastor of a particular church should nevertheless be ordained to the work of the gospel ministry, as an Evangelist to preach the gospel, administer the sealing ordinances and organize churches in frontier or destitute settlements.*" They are called Evangelists, or Ministers *sine titulo*. This should not be done if a Presbytery is already organized in the destitute places

* See p. 370.

† *Manual of Law and Usage*, p. 129; *Form of Government*, ch. iv. See pp. 45, 83, 90, 95, 175, 204.

and new-growing parts of our Church, except by that Presbytery. In 1850 the O. S. Assembly declared that it was orderly to ordain Evangelists "to labor in fields having feeble churches, which are not able to support a Pastor and are too remote conveniently to secure the services of an ordained Minister." Foreign and Home Missionaries, Licentiates engaged in teaching or as Editors, etc., may be thus ordained when the Presbytery deem it necessary. Foreign Missionaries are often ordained *sine titulo* at home, even though they are to labor where Presbyteries have been organized. Great caution is urged upon the Presbyteries in this matter, and between 1764 and 1810 it seems to have been more or less the custom to seek the advice of Synod or General Assembly before consenting to ordain as Evangelists. Yet the proposition to make this consent necessary was rejected by the Presbyteries in 1810 and in 1813.*

What change in the questions at ordination must then be made?

"*The last of the preceding questions shall be omitted, and the following used as a substitute, viz.: Are you now willing to undertake the work of an Evangelist, and do you promise to discharge the duties which may be incumbent on you in this character, as God shall give you strength?*"

What is his standing?

The same as that of other Ministers. The office is the same, but he has no special relation to any particular church.†

How are Candidates received into the ministry of the Episcopal Church?

Candidates well recommended must apply to the Bishop

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 412–415. See p. 33.

† See p. 50.

of the diocese, who shall superintend their studies and employ them as lay readers. They cannot assume the vestments of a clergyman nor pronounce absolution or the benediction. They must be Candidates for three years, after which they are examined, by the Bishop or by two or more Presbyters (Priests) appointed by the Bishop, who are called Examining Chaplains, for ordination as Deacons, the lowest of the three orders in their ministry. The ordination is performed by the Bishop with the laying on of his hands. They are subject to the Bishop, who may license them to preach when he judges them qualified, and may send them to officiate as Deacons under a Priest, the Rector or Pastor of a church. They have special charge of the poor and of the children, assisting the Rector in his public services and pastoral labors. They may baptize and assist in the distributing the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper, but cannot consecrate these elements, nor can they pronounce the absolution or the benediction. They must remain Deacons for one year, and are regarded as Candidates for the Priest's orders (or for the second order of the ministry). As such they must be examined, by the Examining Chaplains or by the Bishop and two Priests, on various subjects; they must read sermons and parts of the service, and present certain certificates testifying to their fitness for the ministry, and that they have been called to labor in some church or parish. The election of a Rector (Pastor) is by the Vestry of the church, and should receive the approval of the Bishop. The Vestry is composed of the Churchwardens and other persons, chosen to take charge of the temporal affairs of the parish, and are not necessarily communicants. The ordination of a Priest is with the laying on of hands by the Bishop and the Priests present.

this may take place at any time or place before his "institution" (or installation) over a parish as its Rector. The service of institution may be performed by a Priest appointed by the Bishop as "the institutor." Priests have all the functions of Ministers, except that of ordination, confirmation and supreme authority, which are invested in Bishops (the third and highest order of the ministry). Bishops are chosen by the Convention of a diocese. A diocese is a certain territory, containing at least six parishes, set apart by the General Convention to be under the jurisdiction of a Bishop. The Convention of a diocese is composed of the Rectors and lay deputies (representing the several churches). These sit together, but vote separately as clergy and laity. The election of a Bishop must receive the approval of the House of Bishops, and of the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies, in General Convention, or, if these be not in session, the approbation of a majority of the Bishops and of the Standing Committees of several dioceses. The ordination of a Bishop is by three or more Bishops, with the laying on of their hands. Their peculiar functions are confirmation, ordination and supervision, each having supreme authority within his own diocese, and together, as the House of Bishops, having the general oversight and highest power of the Church.*

How are Candidates received into the ministry of the Congregational Church?

Candidates apply to some Association for license to preach. An Association is composed of Ministers for prayer and mutual counsel and improvement. It exercises no ecclesiastical function, except that of licensing

* *Digest of Canons*, 1878, title i., canons 1–15; *Book of Common Prayer*.

Candidates. This is done after a careful examination according to the custom of that Association. Application for ordination must be made to a Council composed of Ministers and delegates of churches, called by a congregation choosing a Pastor or approving of a Licentiate's desire to be ordained *sine titulo*. When a Candidate has preached to the satisfaction of a congregation, the communicants, as the church, hold a meeting and vote to call him as their Pastor. The society, which is a self-perpetuating body, composed of persons holding the property and having charge of the financial affairs of the church, also must hold a meeting to concur, if they see fit, in the call voted by the church and to determine the salary of the new Pastor. The action of these two bodies must be laid before the Council; the Candidate is examined by the Council. The ordination is by a committee of three or more Ministers, with the laying on of their hands, in the presence of the congregation. Charges are given to Pastor and people, and a Minister is appointed to represent the ministry and to give to the new Minister the right hand of fellowship in their name.*

How are the Candidates received into the ministry of the Baptist Church?

The Baptist churches are congregational in their polity. They have adopted the following plan in regard to those seeking the ministry: When a young man desires to be a Candidate, he applies to the local church, which after trial of his gifts generally licenses him when he begins his theological studies. The license may be recalled or continued until the young man receives a call to be Pastor of a church; a Council is then summoned to examine and ordain him, as in Congregational churches.

* *Congregationalism*, pp. 136, 152, 168–172.

How are Candidates received into the ministry of the Methodist Church?

In the Methodist Church the communicants are arranged in classes under Class-leaders. Any one on the recommendation of the class, or of the Leaders and Stewards' Meeting of the circuit, may be licensed by the Preacher in charge as an Exhorter. His duties are to hold meetings for prayer and exhortation under the direction of the Preacher in charge, and to attend the District and Quarterly Conferences. The license is for one year, and may be renewed.* Persons are often thus licensed as Exhorters who do not look forward to the ministry. A Local Preacher is one who is licensed from year to year, according to the judgment of the Quarterly Conference, upon passing a prescribed examination. He usually continues in secular business, but may be employed by the Presiding Elder in the pastorate. If he desire ordination, he must submit to a four-year course of study before he can be ordained as a Deacon.† A Deacon is examined by the Annual Conference, and ordained by the laying-on of the hands of a Bishop. His duties as a traveling Deacon are (1) "to administer baptism and solemnize matrimony; (2) to assist the Elder in administering the Lord's Supper; (3) to do all the duties of a traveling Preacher." He may be a Local Deacon, performing these duties occasionally. He must continue his work and fulfill a prescribed course of study for two years before he can be made an Elder.‡ An Elder is examined by the Annual Conference, and ordained by the Bishop and two or more Elders. His duties are those of a Minister in full orders. If a Local

* *Discipline*, 1880, ¶¶ 192, 293. † *Ibid.*, ¶ 91, § 4, and ¶ 189.
‡ *Ibid.*, ¶¶ 172, 174, 175, 189.

Elder, he is stationary, without a particular charge; he exercises his office as occasion may require. If admitted to the Conference as a traveling Elder, he receives annually an appointment as Pastor of a church or churches, and may be reappointed to the same charge for three successive years.* A Presiding Elder is one chosen by the Bishop to preside over a district for not more than four years. He must travel over his district, take charge of the Elders, Deacons and Exhorters, exercise discipline, hold Quarterly Conference, oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the churches, attend the Bishop when present in his district, direct Candidates in their studies, and with other Presiding Elders form the advisory council of the Bishop.† A Bishop is elected by the General Conference and ordained by three Bishops, or at least one Bishop and two Elders. His duties are to preside over Conferences, form districts, fix appointments for Preachers, exercise discipline, travel, oversee the churches, ordain, decide questions of law, and prescribe courses of study for Candidates.‡ (In regard to the Lutheran Church, see p. 197.)

CHAPTER XVI.

OF TRANSLATION, OR REMOVING A MINISTER FROM ONE CHARGE TO ANOTHER.

I. Should the pastoral relation be considered permanent?

The Assembly has often called attention to the fact that the constitution of the Presbyterian Church recog-

* *Discipline*, 1880, ¶¶ 160, 169, 170. † *Ibid.*, ¶¶ 164–168.
‡ *Ibid.*, ¶¶ 158–163.

nizes the pastoral relation as a permanent one, "which time and years shall only serve to strengthen and to hallow, and which may suitably represent in outward form the stable tendencies of our orthodox faith. Our people must be encouraged to call Pastors with a view of keeping them, and our Ministers must enter the pastorate to abide." *

When may it be dissolved?

By death, or under circumstances described in the next chapter, or when the Pastor's services are demanded by another church or by the General Assembly in its Boards or seminaries. But "*no Bishop shall be translated from one church to another, nor shall he receive any call for that purpose, but by the permission of the Presbytery.*" If the General Assembly demands his services, the Presbytery may remonstrate, but cannot oppose the action of the supreme court. The Professors of the seminaries are now called by the Directors, subject to the veto of General Assembly.† Before the Assembly has taken action the call may come before Presbytery, as any other call; their decision will be an important item to be considered by the Assembly when it acts upon the choice of the Directors.

II. If the Pastor be of the same Presbytery as the church desiring him, how shall the call be prosecuted?

The call must be made out according to the previous chapter.‡ "*Any church, desiring to call a settled Minister from his present charge, shall, by commissioners properly authorized, represent to the Presbytery the ground on which they plead for his removal.*" This is often the peculiarities of their church, its importance, its field of useful-

* *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 543. See p. 373. † See p. 315.
‡ See pp. 338–342.

ness, being more extended than that now occupied by the Minister, and his special adaptation to their service. "*The Presbytery, having maturely considered their plea, may, according as it appears more or less reasonable, either recommend to them to desist from prosecuting the call, or may order it to be delivered to the Minister to whom it is directed.*" The church has the right to appeal or complain to Presbytery if dissatisfied with this decision. "*If the parties be not prepared to have the matter issued at that Presbytery, a written citation shall be given to the Minister and his congregation to appear before the Presbytery at their next meeting.*" This is to enable all parties concerned to present their views and pleas before the case is issued, and that the Pastor may have time to consider his duty under the circumstances. "*This citation shall be read from the pulpit in that church by a member of the Presbytery, appointed for that purpose, immediately after public worship; so that at least two Sabbaths shall intervene betwixt the citation and the meeting of the Presbytery at which the cause of translation is to be considered.*" This is in accordance with the rule that citations shall be served at least ten days before parties must appear before the court.* In accordance with this citation, a congregational meeting, composed of those who in that congregation have the right to vote for a Pastor, shall be called† to choose and to instruct their commissioners, who shall appear and answer for them the citation of Presbytery. The church calling the Pastor may again appear by commissioners to urge the call. "*The Presbytery, being met and having heard the parties, shall, upon the whole view of the case, either continue him in his former charge, or translate*

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. iv., sect. v. † See pp. 332, 335.

him, as they shall deem to be most for the peace and edification of the Church; or refer the whole affair to the Synod at their next meeting for their advice and direction." The Presbytery may order the translation, notwithstanding the strong protest of his present charge; that congregation has, however, the right of appeal. But the Presbytery cannot translate a Bishop without his consent.* Sometimes this consent is implied when the Pastor submits the whole case to the wisdom of the Presbytery. The question is not often brought before the Synod except by complaint or appeal.

May this process be shortened?

Generally it is. Indeed, the above directions are only in case "*the parties be not prepared to have the matter issued at that Presbytery.*" The fact that the church has made out a call is often at once communicated to the Minister; if he be disposed to consider the question, he consults his Session, which may deem it expedient to call a congregational meeting to consider the matter and appoint commissioners to represent them when the call is brought before the Presbytery; in which case all parties are prepared to present their pleas, and the whole matter may be issued at that meeting.†

III. How shall the call be prosecuted if the Minister be not of the same Presbytery as the church calling him?

The call is made out as before, and presented for approval to the Presbytery to which that church belongs. "*The congregation shall obtain leave from the Presbytery to which they belong to apply to the Presbytery of which he is a member; and that Presbytery, having cited him and his congregation as before directed, shall proceed to hear and issue the cause.*" This application is made, as before, by the

* See p. 367.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p 417.

commissioners of the congregation, who carry with them the call and a certified copy of the approval of their Presbytery. All parties shall be heard as before. If the call be approved, and "*if they agree to the translation,*" they shall place the call in his hands; and if he express a willingness to accept it, "*they shall release him from his present charge; and, having given him proper testimonials, shall require him to repair to that Presbytery within the bounds of which the congregation calling him lies, that the proper steps may be taken for his regular settlement in that congregation; and the Presbytery to which the congregation belongs, having received an authenticated certificate of his release under the hand of the Clerk of that Presbytery, shall proceed to install him in the congregation as soon as convenient.*" There is some difference of opinion and practice as to which Presbytery places the call in his hands. The language, however, just quoted would seem to assert that the call approved by the Presbytery of the church is sent with the commissioners to that Presbytery of which the Minister is a member, which "*shall proceed to hear and issue the cause.*" He should not be released from his charge nor dismissed from his Presbytery until the call is in his hands and his consent has been obtained. And the Presbytery to which he goes is not directed to do anything save to take "*proper steps for his regular settlement,*" or, as it is again expressed, "*having received an authenticated certificate of his release, . . . shall proceed to install him in the congregation as soon as convenient.*"

May this process be shortened?

It may be shortened. (1) The Minister, being informed of the action of the congregation and of the Presbytery, may inform his own people in time for them to appoint commissioners to appear at the first meeting of

their Presbytery.* (2) The Minister, informed that a call has been made out for him, before either Presbytery has taken action may be so clear as to his duty and confident of the action of both Presbyteries, that he may take steps to secure leave to resign his charge, according to ch. xvii.,† and be transferred by his Presbytery to that one within whose bounds the church calling him may be, and thus be ready to receive the call as soon as it may be presented before that body. This is often done when the Presbyteries are at considerable distance or their times of meeting are inconvenient for the other process. In this case the Presbytery, before releasing him from his charge, should be fully informed of the fact and character of the call which he desires to accept.

May a Pastor be translated without his consent?

"*Provided always that no Bishop or Pastor shall be translated without his own consent previously obtained.*" This does not forbid the Presbytery to dissolve a pastoral relation without the consent of the Pastor.‡

IV. What is installment?

"*It consists in constituting a pastoral relation between him and the people of that particular church.*" When a Licentiate receives a call, his installation forms a part of the service of ordination.§ When, however, a Minister is to be settled over a congregation, he is installed only. Installation "*may be performed either by the Presbytery or by a committee appointed for that purpose, as may appear most expedient.*" It is generally performed by a committee appointed by Presbytery, and composed of those selected to take part in the service.

V. When may installation take place?

"*A day shall be appointed for the installment, at such*

* See p. 375. † See p. 371. ‡ See p. 380. § See p. 351.

time as may appear most convenient, and due notice thereof given to the congregation." It would seem that since the Assembly discourages ordination on the Sabbath, installation should be on some other day; yet, as in ordination, the question is left to the discretion of Presbytery.*

VI. What services should precede installation?

The ordinary service of the church, and "*a sermon shall be delivered by some one of the members previously appointed thereto.*" Sometimes the sermon, by consent of Presbytery, is delivered by a Minister of another Presbytery (considered perhaps as a corresponding member). "*After which the Bishop who is to preside shall state to the congregation the design of their meeting, and briefly recite the proceedings of the Presbytery relative thereto.*"

What promises are required of the Minister?

The following questions are asked of the Minister as he stands near the pulpit before the congregation:

1. "*Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation as their Pastor, agreeably to your declaration at accepting their call?*"

2. "*Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you this charge you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his Church?*"

3. "*Do you solemnly promise that by the assistance of the grace of God you will endeavor faithfully to discharge all the duties of a Pastor to this congregation, and will be careful to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a Minister of the gospel of Christ, agreeably to your ordination engagements?*"

The answers to these questions should be given in a clear, audible voice.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 410. See p. 350.

What promises are required of the congregation?

The presiding Minister *"shall propose to the people the same or like questions as those directed under the head of ordination,"* to wit:*

1. *"Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive ——— ———, whom you have called to be your Minister?"*

2. *"Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in due exercise of discipline?"*

3. *"Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labor, and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?"*

4. *"And do you engage to continue to him, while he is your Pastor, that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised, and whatever else you may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among you?"*

The people generally remain seated while these questions are proposed, but the service is more impressive, and the obligation is better realized, when the people stand before God and the Presbytery and give their assent.

How are these questions to be answered?

"By holding up the right hand in testimony of assent." This should be regarded as a most solemn covenant with God to be faithful in their duties to their Pastor. It may be given by voice or by bowing the head.

Who should answer these questions?

"The people"—all connected with the congregation, especially those who have the right to vote for a Pastor in that congregation.

How should the installation be announced?

Both parties having expressed their readiness to enter

* See p. 352.

into this relation and to perform its duties, and the Presbytery having ordered it, the presiding Minister "*shall solemnly pronounce and declare the said Minister to be regularly constituted the Pastor of that congregation.*" The prayer of installation is then offered, asking the divine approval and blessing.*

What charges are given?

"*A charge shall then be given to both parties, as directed in the case of ordination.*"*

How should the service be closed?

"*After prayer and singing a psalm adapted to the transaction, the congregation shall be dismissed with the usual benediction.*" This is pronounced by the newly-installed Pastor.

VII. How should the people welcome their Pastor?

"*It is highly becoming that, after the solemnity of the installment, the heads of families of that congregation who are then present, or at least the Elders and those appointed to take care of the temporal concerns of that church, should come forward to their Pastor and give him their right hand in token of cordial reception and affectionate regard.*"* It is also proper that the children of the church should come forward to greet their Pastor, as they are in a special manner to be under his care.†

Is the service of installation necessary?

Without it a Minister may perform the duties of a Pastor for a time. He is then called a Stated Supply, but he has no seat in the Session nor authority in discipline or government in that congregation.‡ Nevertheless, in 1736 the Synod recognized the pastoral relation between Rev. Mr. Tennent and the church at Neshaminy, although no formal installment had taken place. The

* See p. 355. † See pp. 107, 158. ‡ See p. 48.

omission of the service was not justified by the Synod. The case was peculiar, owing to the condition of the churches at that time, and especially to the fact that Mr. Tennent had for some time in all respects acted, and been regarded by the community, church, Presbytery and Synod, as the Pastor of that congregation.* But now installation is necessary.

How are Pastors installed in other churches?

In the Episcopal Church the service is called "The Office of Institution of Ministers into Parishes or Churches." It is performed by one or more Presbyters appointed by the Bishop, during which service the Senior Warden presents to the Minister the keys of the church, and the Institutor gives him the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer and the Books of the Canons, to be the "rule of his conduct in dispensing the divine word, in leading the devotions of the people and in exercising discipline in the Church."†

In the Congregational Church the service resembles our own.‡

In the Methodist Church there is no such service, as the Pastors are appointed yearly. Their system is that of itineracy, and not of a settled Ministry.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF RESIGNING A PASTORAL CHARGE.

Can a Pastor resign his charge?

As the pastoral relation is not the result of a mutual

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 419. † *Book of Common Prayer.*

‡ See p. 359.

agreement between the Minister and the people, but has been approved and constituted by the Presbytery, it cannot be dissolved at the pleasure either of the Pastor or congregation. The Presbytery has full and sole authority.* The Minister cannot at pleasure leave his position and enter upon any other engagement. Neither can the congregation dismiss the Pastor or engage another without the sanction of Presbytery. "*When any Minister shall labor under such grievances in his congregation as that he shall desire leave to resign his pastoral charge, the Presbytery shall cite the congregation to appear, by their commissioners, at their next meeting, to show cause, if they have any, why the Presbytery should not accept the resignation.*" "*And if any congregation shall desire to be released from their pastor, a similar process,* mutatis mutandis, *shall be observed.*" This does not imply a want of consultation between the Pastor and people, but that the resignation must be made to the Presbytery, who must judge if the grievances be of such a nature as to render the dissolution of the relation desirable.†

What is meant by "grievance"?

That which burdens, oppresses or injures in the discharge of duty. It may be found in the person or family of the Pastor, or in the community or the congregation, or in the official relation. It may be anything which interferes with or prevents the usefulness of the Pastor, such as sickness, loss of faculties, infirmities of age, the state of health of his family, the needs of the several members thereof, want of proper support, loss of the confidence or affections of the people, positive opposition against him or his work in the church, or the failure of the people to perform the promises made at

* See p. 346. † See p. 203.

the settlement. The grievances of the people may be such as these: their inability to continue the support promised, a growing dissatisfaction with the character of their Minister's services as Preacher or Pastor. A grievance does not include immorality or heresy—when these exist charges should be made before Presbytery*—but a want of adaptation or co-operation on the part of Pastor and people.

Should the pastoral relation be dissolved for slight causes?

The whole chapter implies that the pastoral relation should not be hastily or without grave cause disturbed. The relation should be regarded as permanent, whose influence for good should increase with years.† In 1880 the Assembly declared that, "Whereas the frequent dissolution of the pastoral relation is a growing evil in our Church, arising largely out of the loose opinions which prevail as to the relation of Pastor and people, and the influence of men who regard more the financial than the spiritual interests of the Church; therefore Resolved, 1. That the Presbyteries be reminded of the necessity of giving full and clear instruction on the subject at the time of installation of Pastors. 2. That article xvii. of our 'Form of Government,' in its spirit and letter, should be strictly observed by all our Pastors and churches, and that our Presbyteries be enjoined to seek its rigid enforcement."‡

It is implied in this chapter that even real and serious grievances should be long and patiently borne before any steps are taken, and that the relation be not dissolved until in the judgment of Presbytery and of either Pas-

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. v. † See p. 362.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 77; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 420.

tor or people it be expedient or necessary. "*When any Minister shall labor under such grievances,*" *etc.*

What steps should be taken by the Pastor?

When it is plain to a Pastor that it is his duty to himself or to the church that he should resign, it would be proper for him (1) to consult one or more of his co-Presbyters; (2) to seek the advice of the Elders, the representatives of the church and his official advisers in all that concerns the congregation; (3) to inform the Session of his determination; (4) to give public notice of his intention to ask Presbytery to release him from his pastoral charge; and (5) to present before that body a written or verbal statement of his desire and of his reason for the request. The Presbytery then "*shall cite the congregation to appear by their commissioners, at their next meeting, to show cause, if any they have, why the Presbytery should not accept the resignation.*"

Can the Presbytery at its first meeting accept the resignation?

The intent of this chapter is to forbid hasty action, and to prevent the dissolution until the church as well as the Pastor be fully heard. If, however, the congregation has been duly informed by the Pastor of his intention, and been invited to unite with him in his request to Presbytery, and if the Session has called a meeting of the congregation to consider the question and to appoint commissioners to appear and answer at the first meeting, then the Presbytery may proceed at once.* At the meeting of the congregation the grievance may appear imaginary or less serious than was supposed, or it may be removed, or love to the Pastor may be found so

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 419, 420. See *Form of Government*, ch. xvi., sect. ii. See p. 365.

general and deep-seated, and the interests at stake to be so great, that the Pastor may be induced to withdraw his notice of resignation. Or it may be ascertained that the Pastor has been misinformed as to the condition of the church and the state of feeling toward him and his work. Or the congregation may be so convinced that he ought not to leave them that they shall refuse to unite with him in his application to Presbytery, and the Pastor may be unwilling to urge his desire against this opposition. In these cases no further step need be taken, save a public notice that he has determined to accede to their desire and remain as their Pastor. But if he continue unchanged in his convictions of duty, the matter must come before Presbytery.

How shall the congregation appear?

"*By their commissioners.*" These must be appointed at the meeting of the congregation called by the Session for this purpose, presided over by the Pastor or by a Minister of the Presbytery chosen by the Pastor and Session, and the voters being those who in that church have the right to vote for a Pastor.* The number of commissioners may be determined by the meeting. Sometimes they are chosen to represent the Session and the congregation, or from different classes of the congregation, or from the majority and the minority if there be a serious division on the matter or no positive decision is arrived at. The object is to place before the Presbytery a true and fair representation of the wishes and views of the people. The commissioners should take with them the authenticated copies of the minutes of the meeting, and be prepared to make, in writing or verbally, further statements if necessary. They may be instructed to join

* See pp. 126, 332.

with the Pastor in his request, or "*to show cause, if any they have, why the Presbytery should not accept the resignation.*" And if they be not satisfied with the action of Presbytery, they have a right to complain to the higher courts.

May the Presbytery decide in opposition to the wishes of the church?

The Presbytery must be duly certified that the congregation has received proper notice and had opportunity to appoint commissioners—that the citations have been duly served. But "*if the congregation fail to appear, or if their reasons for retaining their Pastor be deemed by the Presbytery insufficient, he shall have leave granted to resign his pastoral charge, of which due record shall be made, and that church shall be held vacant till supplied again in an orderly manner with another Minister.*" The responsibility of the decision rests upon the Presbytery. The church or Pastor feeling aggrieved by the decision may appeal or complain to the Synod.

If the congregation shall labor under grievances, what steps should be taken?

Prayer, especially in secret, increased personal activity in co-operation with the Pastor, will certainly lessen, if not remove, the supposed or real grievances. If any new financial burden come upon the congregation, the Trustees should at once consult with the Pastor in regard to it. If the spiritual interests of the church are suffering from any cause, even from the want of necessary qualifications in the Pastor, or from his neglect of duties or lack of spirituality or devotedness, or from sickness or the increasing infirmities of age, it is the duty of the Elders, with much prayer and tenderness, to inform him of the facts. He is over them in the Lord. They have

no right to find fault or to reprove. He is not their servant nor their equal. He is accountable to the Presbytery. But the Elders, as "the representatives of the people," and, "in conjunction with the Pastor," being "charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation," and "to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation,"* ought to keep him informed of everything that hinders his work among them or their growth in grace. If there be any alienation of the congregation, or a general and growing dissatisfaction with his preaching or pastoral work, or if there be a disaffected minority who are exerting an injurious influence, the Elders should know it, and should impart the knowledge to the Pastor, that he may consult with them how to remove these hindrances to his usefulness. Under these trying circumstances the people and the Elders, their representatives, should remember the solemn vows which they made when he was made their Pastor,† and especially if he has grown old in their service. The result of such official fidelity, Christian sympathy and mutual confidence will very often remove the grievances without disturbing the pastoral relation. Sometimes the information has been withheld too long, or the Pastor may conclude that the interests of the church may be best promoted by his resignation, and he will take the necessary steps.‡ But in that case he will respect and love the Elders for their Christian fidelity, and will leave the church harmonious and ready to be benefited by the labors of another Pastor. If, however, the measures proposed by the Session do not remove the grievance, further conference should

* *Form of Government*, ch. v., and ch. ix., sect. vi.

† See p. 352. ‡ See p. 374.

be had between the Elders and the Pastor, and other measures adopted and tried. If these should fail, or if the Pastor should refuse to consider the grievance of the people—which nevertheless continues to interfere with the spiritual edification of the church—the Elders "should apply to some other Bishop of the Presbytery for his advice in the case,"* for the same reasons, among others, as when ill-report or charges are brought against a Minister. Generally, such advice will be given to the Pastor and Elders as will remove the grievance or induce the Pastor to resign his charge. If not, the Elders should very seriously consider the interests of their Pastor and the church, and, if thought necessary, the whole case should by them be brought before Presbytery, the Pastor being kindly informed of their intention. This should be done (1) by a formal reference of the case by vote of Session;† or (2) by a petition of the Elders of the church or of any persons in the congregation;† or (3) the condition of the church may be brought to the consideration of Presbytery on the review of the minutes of Session.‡ If the case be very urgent, the Session may, on their own motion or at request of the people,§ call a meeting of the congregation to appoint commissioners to appear before Presbytery at its next meeting and state their grievances, as in the case of the Pastor laboring under grievances. The Presbytery will act as before, citing both parties to show cause, etc.

May a congregation, desiring the resignation of the Pastor, make grievances to induce him to resign?

No. That were unchristian and a violation of the vows made by the people at his installation. They are

* *Book of Discipline*, ch. v., sect. vi.
† *Ibid.*, ch. vii., sect. ii.
‡ *Ibid.*, ch. vii., sect. i.
§ See pp. 161, 332.

bound to "receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline;" "to encourage him in his arduous labors, and to assist his endeavors for their instruction and spiritual edification."* Any open or secret opposition, personal or organized, is a violation of these vows, and renders the person or persons so engaged liable to charges as disturbers of the peace of the Church.

May the congregation signify their dissatisfaction by diminishing the Pastor's salary?

That were unmanly, unchristian and a violation of the contract in the call and of the vows made at his installation.†

Is the Pastor's presence necessary at the congregational meeting?

No. The call for the meeting must come from the Session.‡ If the Pastor declines to be present, or if the Session deem it advisable, they should invite some other Bishop of the Presbytery to moderate the meeting.§ If the application to dissolve the pastoral relation comes from the Pastor, as well as from the congregation, the meeting is valid without his presence and co-operation. So the O. S. Assembly decided.‖

May the Presbytery dissolve the relation on the petition of a minority?

It may. However the case may be brought before the Presbytery, by the general review, by petition of Pastor or of Elders or of the congregation or of a minority, that court has the power to render the decision, which must be determined, not by the wishes of the parties, but by the interests of the Pastor and the church. The

* See p. 353. † See p. 340. ‡ See p. 332. § See p. 126.
‖ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 420.

right must be recognized "of each congregation to decide whether a Pastor is acceptable to them, and the wishes of a majority are to be set aside only for weighty reasons; yet such a state of things may exist between the Pastor and a portion of his people as shall require for the fair name of religion that the relation be dissolved." So the O. S. Assembly decided.*

May the relation be dissolved contrary to the wishes of the Pastor?

Yes, for the same reasons. This is implied in the whole of this chapter. The Pastor has the right to complain to the higher courts.†

How is the church to be declared vacant?

After the vote is taken on the question, the Moderator should declare that the Pastor is relieved from the charge of the ——— church, and a member of the Presbytery should be appointed to preach in that church on a certain Lord's Day, and in the name of the Presbytery to declare the pulpit vacant. Generally, permission is given to the Session to supply their pulpit until the next meeting of the Presbytery.

How do Pastors resign in other churches?

In the Episcopal Church "a Rector, canonically elected and in charge, or an instituted Minister, may not resign his parish without consent of the said parish or its Vestry (if the Vestry be authorized to act in the premises); nor may such Rector or Minister be removed therefrom by said parish or Vestry against his will," except under certain circumstances. Any difficulty arising between Rector and parish "which may not be satisfactorily settled by the godly judgment of the Bishop alone, . . . the Bishop, acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 421. † *Ibid.*, pp. 420, 421.

of the diocese, . . . shall be the ultimate arbitrator and judge." If the Rector's resignation is accepted by the Vestry, the fact should be reported to the Bishop for his approval.*

In the Congregational Church, when a Pastor wishes to resign his charge he notifies his congregation of the fact, and sends his letter of resignation to a meeting of the church and also to the society, who take separate action thereon, and call a Council "to devise and act . . . in the emergency, and to give the Minister a parting letter of recommendation."†

In the Methodist Church the Minister in charge is appointed only for one year, and if possible he will bear the grievance until the end of his appointment, informing the Presiding Elder and the Bishop of his desire to be sent to some other church at the next Annual Conference. If, however, for any reason, he desires to leave the church before the end of the year, he must obtain permission to do so from the Presiding Elder and Bishop.‡

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF MISSIONS.

What is meant by "missions"?

The word "mission" is used to indicate the act of sending or being sent by authority to do a certain work; or the persons sent especially to propagate religion; or the station of missionaries. The word is here used to

* *Digest of the Canon*, title ii., canon iv.

† *Congregational Manual*, p. 10; *Congregationalism*, pp. 198–205.

‡ *Discipline*, 1880, ¶¶ 160, 166.

include the authority and the efforts of the Church to extend its boundaries, and especially to preach the gospel to the destitute within the bounds of Presbyteries throughout our land and in other countries.

When vacancies occur in a Presbytery, what should be done?

The Presbytery has the oversight of the territory assigned to it by the General Assembly, and should feel its responsibility to see that the gospel is faithfully preached to all within its bounds.* If any of its churches be vacant, it should take such action as may be necessary to secure for them Pastors,† and to provide regular services for each during its vacancy.‡ "*When vacancies become so numerous in any Presbytery that they cannot be supplied with frequent administrations of the word and ordinances, it shall be proper for such Presbytery, or vacant congregation within their bounds, with leave of the Presbytery, to apply to any other Presbytery, or to any Synod, or to the General Assembly, for such assistance as they can afford.*" This applies to the destitute fields within the bounds of the Presbytery, as well as to the organized churches.

What assistance may be expected?

1. Ministers and Licentiates, who should be furnished with proper certificates. "*When any Presbytery shall send any of their Ministers or Probationers to distant vacancies, the Missionary shall be ready to produce his credentials to the Presbytery or Presbyteries through the bounds of which he may pass, or at least to a committee thereof, and obtain their approbation.*"

2. Pecuniary help should be given. "*Provided always*

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 321. † See p. 212.

‡ *Form of Government*, ch. xxi. See p. 328, 505.

. . . *that the judicatory sending them make the necessary provision for their support and reward in the performance of this service.*" When the vacant church is able to support a Minister, then the means will not be "necessary," and the church should soon proceed to make out a call for him to be settled over them.* In 1709 the Ministers of London promised to send two itinerant Ministers to help the Church in this country and support them for two years, but "they drew back their hand," and in 1710 the Presbytery of Philadelphia applied to the Presbytery of Dublin to send and support one young Minister for one year.†

To whom are these Missionaries responsible?

Ministers are always responsible to the Presbyteries to which they belong.‡ This is true, though they may derive their support entirely from some other source, and though they may be called upon to report the advance of their work to some other body or bodies. When laboring within the bounds of another Presbytery, a Minister must "*be ready to produce his credentials to that Presbytery, . . . and obtain their approbation.*" It is of course advisable that as soon as possible the church or mission-field and the Missionary should belong to the same Presbytery, if he intend to labor there any length of time. He cannot be settled over a church while belonging to another Presbytery.§

May the General Assembly send missions?

The application for assistance may be made "*to any other Presbytery, or to any Synod, or to the General Assembly.*" Further, the General Assembly, having supreme authority over the whole Church, without any application

* See p. 332. † *Assembly's Digest*, p. 322.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 517. See p. 204. § See pp. 176, 180.

"*may of their own knowledge send missions to any part to plant churches or to supply vacancies.*" But the rights of the Presbytery must be respected; to it belongs the prerogative of examining and ordaining, judging of the qualifications of its members, and of directing the work within its own bounds, subject, of course, to review.* The selection of men and the judging of their qualifications belong to Presbytery. The General Assembly may call for men, and "*may direct any Presbytery to ordain Evangelists, or Ministers without relation to particular churches.*" †

May Ministers be sent without their consent?

"*Provided always that such missions be made with the consent of the parties appointed.*" In 1759 the Synod appointed certain Pastors to go into Virginia, and conduct services there from a set day, and to remain "for some time, according to the order of that Presbytery." And the Presbyteries of Philadelphia and New Brunswick were ordered "to take care that these gentlemen fulfill this appointment, and neither prescribe nor allow them employment in our bounds, so as to disappoint this our good intention." These Ministers were further charged "that they fulfill said appointments, on pain of the Synod's censure."‡

Who may be sent as Missionaries?

(1) Pastors or other Ministers who are temporarily withdrawn from their charges or other work, and sent on tours of longer or shorter duration. And (2) Evangelists—Ministers ordained "to preach the gospel, etc. in frontier or destitute settlements;" in other words, for this special work, to be engaged therein permanently under the direction of the Assembly and Presbytery.†

* See pp. 195, 199, 204. † See p. 356.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 328.

Board of Home Missions.

How early did our Church take action on missions?

At the first meeting of which the records remain, in 1707, the General Presbytery adopted the following resolution: "That every Minister of the Presbytery supply neighboring desolate places where a Minister is wanting and opportunity of doing good offers."* At the first meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia it was resolved that it be "proposed to the several members of the Synod to contribute something to the raising a fund for pious uses, and that they use their interest with their friends on proper occasions to contribute something to the same purpose; and that there be chosen a Treasurer to keep what shall be collected, and that what is or may be gathered be disposed of according to the discretion of the Synod." Mr. Jedidiah Andrews was appointed. The next day the collection "was weighed and delivered into his hands," "the just sum of eighteen pounds one shilling and sixpence, for which he obliges himself, his heirs, executors and administrators, to be accountable to the Synod."† "This was the first fund for benevolent purposes created by the Presbyterian Church in this country." Appeals for aid were sent to England, Scotland and Ireland, and some additions were thus obtained to the fund of the Synod. The first appropriation from this fund was made by the Synod "to the Presbyterian congregation of New York, toward the support of the gospel among them." It was further ordered that every Minister belonging to this Synod receive a letter "recommending a yearly collection to be gathered in every

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 10.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 50; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 323.

particular congregation for pious uses, to be sent yearly to the Synod by their Minister or Elder." In 1738 "it was unanimously agreed by all the members of Synod that every Minister shall either" take up such annual collection, "or oblige themselves to pay out of their own proper estates ten shillings to the fund."* The first itinerant Missionaries, three in number, were appointed in 1722.†

What is an itinerant Missionary?

He is one appointed to travel over a certain district, preaching in destitute places. At first these were appointed for temporary work, to make a single tour, sometimes merely for three months, but generally until the next meeting of the judicatory. A special route was designated by the court, which the Missionary was required to pursue. He was not expected to preach to established congregations.‡ He was required to preach, to "form societies, help them in adjusting their bounds, ordain Elders, administer sealing ordinances, instruct the people in discipline, and finally direct them in their after conduct, particularly in what manner they shall proceed to obtain a stated ministry, and whatever else may appear useful or necessary for those churches."§ Often he was required to establish regular mission-stations, and visit them at regular times until developed into organized churches. In the O. S. Church in 1839 and 1844 all Pastors were urged to make annually a missionary tour of this character.‖ In the N. S. body, in 1852, "each Presbytery, whose circumstances as to territory, churches

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 56, 57, 136.

† *Ibid.*, p. 74; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 326.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 346; *New Digest*, p. 320.

§ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 328, 345; *New Digest*, pp. 320, 324.

‖ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 358.

and members demand it, is recommended to appoint an itinerant Missionary within its bounds," and each Synod "to appoint such a Missionary, whose duty it shall be to act as a traveling Evangelist, after the scriptural pattern, to explore destitute fields, to prepare the way for the formation of new churches by the Presbyteries, to seek for Ministers to take charge of them, to assist and direct in building houses of worship in destitute places."*

What was the origin of the Boards?

At the first meeting of the General Assembly, in 1789, the importance of missions was recognized, and each Synod was requested to recommend at the next meeting "two members well qualified to be employed in missions on our frontier;" and the Presbyteries were enjoined "to have collections made during the present year in the several congregations under our care." The next year a committee of five was appointed "to prepare certain directions necessary for the Missionaries of the Assembly in fulfilling the design of their mission, and to specify the compensation that it will be proper to make them for their services." They reported the next day, and two Missionaries were appointed to labor for at least three months in the frontier settlements of New York and Pennsylvania, and salaries were voted for them. This committee became one of the standing committees of the General Assembly. In 1799 a report was adopted on the method of managing missions, recommending (1) that the missions should be conducted by men really qualified, who shall preach the doctrines of grace, organize churches, catechise from house to house; (2) they should "be well acquainted with the forms of government, as well of the Congregational as of the Presbyte-

* *New Digest*, p. 364.

rian Church;" (3) it is important that one or more persons of suitable qualifications be appointed "to be a common medium of information, and for aiding and directing such Missionaries as may be annually sent out by the General Assembly;" (4) that the Missionaries go two and two, and their routes be prescribed by General Assembly; (5) that the "Confession of Faith" and "System of Discipline" of this Church be distributed by the Missionaries.* In 1800 four Boards were anticipated: (1) Gospelizing the Indians; (2) instructing the negroes; (3) distributing Bibles, books and tracts; (4) educating young men for the ministry.† In 1802 the Assembly created a Standing Committee of Missions—four Ministers and three Elders. Its duties were to obtain information, to nominate Missionaries, direct them to places and in their work, to correspond, obtain reports, inquire concerning funds, to select a Minister to preach the annual missionary sermon before the Assembly, and to superintend the missionary business under the direction of the General Assembly. This committee were empowered to call upon the Trustees of the General Assembly, during its recess, for moneys needed. In 1805 this Standing Committee of Missions was increased to seventeen, of which ten resided in or near Philadelphia, and one other member from each Synod. In 1816 the committee was enlarged, and its title changed to "the Board of Missions, acting under the authority of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States."‡

What is the difference between a Standing Committee and a Permanent Committee?

The standing committees are appointed at the opening

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 341–349. † *Ibid.*, p. 312.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 422, 423.

of each Assembly, and continue until they report and are discharged by that body. The permanent committees are those outside of the Assembly, and are not dissolved by its adjournment.* This distinction was made by the N. S. Church, and the permanent committees had the oversight of the benevolent work of the Church, as the Boards had in the O. S. body, but were more directly dependent on the Assembly than the Boards. Before the division, however, the term "Standing Committees" was not so strictly defined. The Standing Committee on Missions was in 1802 required to be appointed yearly, yet had something of the character of a Permanent Committee, in that it performed its work throughout the year and until the adjournment of the next Assembly.†

What is the difference between a Standing or Permanent Committee and a Board?

A committee, standing or permanent, is "bound in all cases to act according to the instructions of the Assembly, and is under the necessity of receiving its sanction to all the measures which it may propose." A Board has "full powers to transact all the business of the missionary cause, only requiring the Board to report annually to the General Assembly." It can carry on its work with vigor and unity of design, and enjoy the benefit of the advice and counsel of the Assembly.‡

What powers were granted to the Board of Missions?

In addition to the powers already granted to the Committee of Missions, the Board was authorized to appoint Missionaries, to pay moneys to them, and to establish auxiliary missionary societies throughout our churches.

* *New Digest*, p. 361. † *Assembly's Digest*, p. 350.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

It was thought best that the Board should confine its work to domestic missions, lest the pressure of business become too severe. But the Board had "the power to establish missions not only among the destitute in our own country or any other country, but also among the heathen in any part of the world," and to take charge of such missions. It had power also to appoint an Executive Committee and agents. In 1828 the Board was increased to twenty-six Ministers and fifteen Elders.*

What further changes were made?

In 1830 an effort was made to conduct the missionary operations in the West through a common Board of Agency, appointed by the Board of Missions of the General Assembly and the American Home Missionary Society. This failed after considerable discussion. The idea, however, was not given up, and until the division of the Church in 1838 several efforts were made to effect a union between these bodies or to discontinue the Board of Missions. The Presbyteries carried on their missionary operations through our Board or through the American Home Missionary Society. The New School Presbyteries and churches co-operated with the latter, and the Old School with the former. After the division the N. S. Assembly continued to do so until 1861, when the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions was formed.†

What is the American Home Missionary Society?

Prior to 1822 various local domestic missionary societies were formed. Many of these sent their missionaries even to the far West and South. In May of that year delegates of ten of these local societies in New York State, belonging to the Presbyterian and the Dutch Re-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 423, 424.

† *Assembly's Digest*, p. 356; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 424–426.

formed churches, were consolidated, forming the "United Domestic Missionary Society of New York." It was not a denominational institution. In 1826 it had 127 Missionaries, 100 of whom labored in New York, and 27 in ten other States. In 1825 a circular was published by its Executive Committee, at the request of a meeting of Ministers held in Boston, calling a meeting of Congregational, Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed churches, to be held in the Brick Presbyterian Church, New York, to form a National Domestic Missionary Society. Drs. Alexander and Miller of the Princeton Seminary endorsed the plan. A constitution was adopted, and the "United Domestic Missionary Society" was requested to become the "American Home Missionary Society" by accepting this constitution and changing its name. This was done May 12, 1826. One of the preliminary principles was, "that existing missionary societies were neither to be superseded, except in accordance with their own desire, nor impeded in their operations, but rather to be strengthened and stimulated."* For a time this society and our Board of Missions† worked together harmoniously; but for some time before 1837 there was in many a "deep conviction that the Home Missionary Society, under the management of its Secretary, had become a great party engine, operating most unfavorably for the peace, union and purity of the Church."‡

What was "the Standing Committee on Church Extension"?

In 1849 the N. S. Assembly, while co-operating with the American Home Missionary Society, felt called upon to take charge of that part of the work which the socie-

* *Home Missionary*, vol. xxxiii., pp. 157–166. † See p. 390.

‡ *Church Polity*, pp. 417–435.

ty could not perform. Presbyteries were admonished to secure supplies for all their feeble churches, and to gather new congregations by permanent missionary agents. Sabbath-school work was urged, and the building of new churches with aid secured in their vicinity, or in more distant places when furnished with testimonials from their Synods. The next year Presbyteries were recommended to take such action within their own bounds that new churches may be organized, if necessary, by aid from the Home Missionary Society, and that destitute churches be supplied with regular preaching. The older and wealthier churches were expected to help the weaker. In 1852, on report of a committee appointed the previous year, the American Home Missionary Society was recommended as the agency through which, as heretofore, the work of domestic missions shall be done; but each Presbytery was directed each year to elect a Standing Committee on Church Extension. Collections from the churches shall be sent to the Home Missionary Society. Applications for aid must have the recommendation of Presbytery, but "shall not require the official sanction of any agent of that society." The society, however, shall have the right to obtain information, and have discretion to grant in whole or in part the application. The Presbyteries shall appoint itinerant Missionaries to explore destitute fields, gather new congregations, seek for Ministers to take charge of them, direct in building churches, and in all ways promote church extension, under presbyterial or synodical committees. Each Synod shall have a Church Extension Committee, yearly appointed, and shall require an annual collection from its churches to assist, by loan or gift, feeble churches to build houses. Among the other Standing Committees of the Assembly, one on

Church Extension shall be yearly appointed, which shall condense the reports from the Synods and Presbyteries on this subject, and present further propositions for carrying on the work. A committee of five was appointed to confer with the "American Home Missionary Society," requesting its co-operation in this plan as far as its principles would admit. In 1853 this committee of conference reported that the society had no disposition to interfere with the ecclesiastical functions of Synods and Presbyteries, or with the relations of the churches, or to make discriminations in favor of one denomination and against another. Confidence was expressed by the Assembly that our home missionary work could be more successfully prosecuted under the present arrangements with that society than by any new organization. At the same time the Assembly was satisfied that the rules of the society sometimes prevented the extension of the Church in the West, and where aid should be granted.*

What was "the Church Extension Committee"?

In 1855 the attention of the Assembly was directed to those cases of home work which are excluded by the rules of the Home Missionary Society, as the employment of synodical, presbyterial or exploring Presbyterian Missionaries, the planting of Presbyterian churches in advance of all others, and the founding of churches in cities and large villages. The Assembly, while operating through the society for some purposes, did not give to it a right to control the whole subject of Church Extension, nor could it part with its own responsibility. It therefore established a committee to be called "the Church Extension Committee," to be located in Philadelphia, having no functions except those expressly assigned to

* *New Digest*, pp. 361–367.

it. Those first given were—"employing presbyterial, synodical and other Presbyterian itinerant or exploring agents, and affording aid in such exceptional cases as those already mentioned, and also the receiving and disbursing funds for these objects." It was not intended to establish an ecclesiastical Board or to interfere with the Home Missionary Society. The co-operative policy of the Church in home missions was unchanged. This committee was to be supplementary, to attend to cases which the rules of the society excluded. In 1857 more discretion was granted to the committee in relation to applications which required prompt action. In 1859 its powers were again enlarged, to provide for churches that could not be aided from other sources.*

What was "the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions"?

It was organized by the N. S. Assembly in 1861, and incorporated the next year. It was composed of fifteen members chosen by the Assembly. Its object was "to assist in sustaining the preaching of the gospel in feeble churches and congregations in connection with the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and generally to superintend the whole course of home missions in behalf of said Church, as its General Assembly may from time to time direct; also to receive, take charge of and disburse any property or funds which at any time and from time to time may be entrusted to said Church or said committee for home missionary purposes." This continued its work until 1871.†

What was "the Western Committee of Missions"?

In 1845 the O. S. Assembly, in order to prosecute its

* *New Digest*, pp. 367–375.

† *Minutes* (*N. S.*) *G. A. 1861*, pp. 466-469; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 425. See p. 396.

missions in the West with more vigor, decided that the Board of Missions should appoint a committee, to be called "the Western Committee of Missions," to be located at Louisville, Ky., to have similar powers with that located in Philadelphia, making monthly reports to the Board. It had a Secretary and General Agent and Treasurer.* This was continued until 1862.†

What was "the South-western Advisory Committee"?

In 1859 the O. S. Assembly ordered the Board of Missions to establish in the city of New Orleans an Advisory Committee, with a District Secretary, "to set forward the work of missions in the South-west, the details to be arranged by conference between the Board and the said committee." "The Board was also empowered to make a similar arrangement at the North-west." This Advisory Committee was located at San Francisco. Both these committees were discontinued by order of the Assembly in 1862, and the Board of Missions was directed "hereafter to conduct throughout the entire field its work, as formerly, through the Presbyteries."‡

What was "the Board of Domestic Missions"?

This was the same as the Board of Missions. In 1857 the General Assembly approved the action of the Board in obtaining from the Legislature of Pennsylvania a change in its corporate title—viz., the introduction of the word "Domestic"—to prevent inconvenience and loss which was occasioned by the frequent confounding the Board of Missions and that of Foreign Missions.§

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 355.
† *Minutes G. A.* (*O. S.*), *1862*, p. 602.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1859*, p. 530; *1860*, p. 55; *1862*, p. 602.
§ *Ibid.*, *1857*, pp. 19, 75.

What was "the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions"?

After the reunion of the two branches (O. S. and N. S.) of the Church in 1869, the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions obtained an act from the New York Legislature authorizing the substitution of "Board" for "Committee" in its title. This was passed January 20, 1871.*

What is "the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America"?

In 1869 it was agreed that the Board of Domestic Missions and the Committee of Home Missions should continue in operation until proper legal steps could be taken to consolidate them without risking the property and funds belonging to them. This was accomplished in 1872, and the new Board received the title, "The Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," and obtained a charter from the State of New York. The Board of Domestic Missions was continued until 1873, when by an act of the State of Pennsylvania its property was transferred to the new Board, which was declared to be the legal successor of both.†

How are applications for aid to be made to the Board?

The Missionary and his field of labor must be in connection with the General Assembly. The application should state (1) name of church and Minister; (2) number of communicants and size of congregation; (3) how near are other churches, and of what size; (4) population and character of the place; (5) the ability and promises of the congregation; and (6) the smallest sum really needed. The application must be signed by the Elders, Deacons and Trustees, and sent to the Presby-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 428. † *Ibid.*, pp. 427–430.

tery for its approval. The Presbytery shall vote on it by ballot, both as to the application and as to the amount, and forward it to the Board.* The congregation is expected to fulfill its pledges to the Missionary, and to take up a collection for the Board. The appropriations granted are only for a year, but may be renewed on application again through the Presbytery.†

Is the Board bound to grant every application?

It is the duty of the Presbytery carefully to examine the necessity of the aid applied for; and to it belongs the responsibility of the question, Ought the church to receive aid, and to what amount? This cannot be done by the Board. A different question must be answered when the application comes before it, viz.: Can the appropriation be granted? This must be determined by the amount of funds entrusted to the care of the Board, and by the relative importance of other applications coming from the entire field. It may, because of want of funds, reject it or grant only part of the desired appropriation.‡ The Presbytery sometimes feels that it has a right to make applications to the amount which it has contributed to the Board. But this is not the principle upon which the Board was established. The churches contribute to the general work of home missions, and the Board entrusted with these funds must consider the whole field in judging of its ability to make an appropriation. Appendix, p. 539.

What is the relation of the Board to the Presbytery in regard to missions?

"The Board of Missions is an ecclesiastical organization, and operates through the Presbyteries; its success,

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 427. † See *Rules of the Board.*
‡ *Church Polity*, p. 443.

therefore, must depend essentially on the co-operation of the Presbyteries and the efficiency of their aid." "The success of the Board in obtaining suitable Missionaries for distant places must depend essentially on the official information they are enabled to give to those who apply for commissions."* The Missionary is responsible to the Presbytery, which has also full control over his church or field of labor.† The Missionary must send, however, regular reports to the Board while commissioned by it. "When aid-receiving churches become vacant, they are usually cut off from home missionary aid until they shall have found an acceptable Minister ready to be commissioned." It is then the duty of the Presbytery, through its committee, "to endeavor in its own way to nourish and sustain these churches until they are advanced to a condition in which they can be assisted by the Board of Home Missions."‡ In 1880 the Assembly received overtures from one Synod and seventeen Presbyteries asking that a committee consider the modes of operation of this Board in its relation to the Presbyteries. The committee reported the next year in part.§ Appendix, p. 539.

What is the Sustentation Department of the Board?

(See p. 465.)

What is "the Women's Executive Committee of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church"?

"The work of Christian women in behalf of home missions dates as far back as the beginning of home missions in this country." It was carried on chiefly in prayer and in the preparation of boxes for the Missionaries. After the reunion there was an increased activity

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 361.
† See p. 383.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 176.
§ *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 529

on the part of the women, and they were invited by the Board to make organized efforts to collect money for the Board. A deep interest was excited also in the condition of women in heathen lands, who were in great degradation and inaccessible to our Missionaries. In some places in our own country, as in Utah, New Mexico and Arizona, their condition was much the same, and they were perhaps quite as isolated. This great need for "women's work for women" led to the organization of women's missionary societies and women's boards for missions, their object being to collect funds and to send out women to labor among their sisters at home and abroad. Some have embraced both the home and foreign field; others have charge either of the home or the foreign work. These are all more or less connected with the Boards of the Church, and some have committees or branch societies in the Synods, Presbyteries and churches. In 1878 a convention of women was held in Pittsburg during the session of the General Assembly in regard to some more complete organization for home missions. It led to a conference with the Ladies' Board of Missions in New York "as to their willingness to devote themselves exclusively to home missions, thereby becoming the 'Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church.'" This failed, and the "Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church" was organized. Its office is in New York.* There are in 1881 five women's societies auxiliary to the Board. Of these, the "Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions" is the largest. In twenty-seven Synods it has committees of women ratified by the Synods. The Executive Committee is formed of

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 41; *1877*, p. 633; *1879*, pp. 572, 594, 678.

two members of each synodical committee. Their collections during the year amount to $27,793, and missionary-boxes valued at about $17,000.*

Board of Education.

What were the early measures of the Church to educate young men for the ministry?

The General Synod in 1733 granted an appropriation from its "fund for pious uses" to a student. In 1739 an overture was approved for the erection of a school or seminary of learning by the Synod. A commission was appointed to accomplish it, which adopted a plan, applied to the churches for aid and drew up an appeal also to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The war between England and Spain caused "the whole affair to be laid aside for that time." In 1743 the Presbyteries of Philadelphia, New Castle and Donegal agreed to open a school for the education of youth, and the Synod at its next meeting (1744) approved of this action and took the school under its care. The object to be accomplished was to give free instruction in the languages, philosophy and divinity. The school was placed under the charge of Rev. Francis Alison, who was allowed an usher, and was to be supported by yearly contributions from the churches. For a few years (1757–62) the school received annually a sum from "the Trustees General of the society's schools for the instruction of poor Germans, etc. in Pennsylvania, etc.," on condition "that the master shall teach four Dutch or English (young men) gratis, upon the recommendation of the Trustees General, to be prepared for the ministry, and ten poor Dutch children in the English tongue, gratis." †

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 531.

† *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 106, 149, 151, 175, 228.

See p. 311.

When was the College of New Jersey founded?

In 1746, at Elizabethtown, by the Synod of New York. It was the fourth college established in the country (Harvard University in 1636, William and Mary College in 1692, and Yale in 1700). It was removed to Princeton in 1757.* In 1752 the Synod ordered collections to be taken in the churches for the college, and the next year Revs. G. Tennent and S. Davies were sent to Europe to solicit aid for it. The address sent to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland stated that the object of the college was to educate pious young men for the ministry, and thus enable the Church to supply the increasing number of vacancies and the destitute fields in its bounds. In 1768 the United Synod of New York and Philadelphia approved of the appointment of a Professor of Theology in the college, and made appropriation from collections for his support. There was also a fund in the hands of the Trustees, the interest of which was applied by the Synod to aid poor and pious students.† The General Assembly in 1806 declared "the College of New Jersey was originally founded with a particular view to promote the interests of religion, as well as of learning, by training up men of piety and talents for the ministry of the gospel. The Trustees of the institution have ever been attentive to this great object, and have made most generous provision for the support of theological students. . . . All persons who are actually engaged in the study of theology . . . may, on producing proper testimonials of character, pursue their further studies here at the

* *American Cyclopædia.*

† *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 248, 252, 256, 379, 399. See p. 311.

moderate charge of one dollar a week for board, and enjoy the assistance of the President and Professor of Theology without any fee for instruction. This Professor gives lectures to the theological students twice a week. . . . His course of lectures embraces divinity, ecclesiastical history, church government, Christian and Jewish antiquities, and the duties of the pastoral office. He instructs those who desire it in the Hebrew language, so useful and almost indispensable to a good divine. At every meeting one or more of the pupils submit to his criticisms and remarks an essay or sermon on a subject previously assigned." A theological society was held once a week, and access was granted to a large theological library.* At present (1881) the college is under the care of the Synod of New Jersey, accomplishing the same objects, but having no theological department, according to the agreement made in 1811.†

What presbyterial scheme for education was approved?

In 1771 the Presbytery of New Castle transmitted to the Synod a plan which was approved by it, and other Presbyteries were encouraged to do likewise. The plan was, that vacant churches in the Presbytery subscribe annually two pounds, and every Minister in the Presbytery one pound, and the fund be increased by voluntary annual subscriptions. Young men to be aided must be recommended by a Minister and examined and approved by Presbytery, which shall direct his studies and have a right to his services for one year after his ordination. If the student be afterward not inclined to enter the ministry, he must return the money expended upon him within five years.‡ In 1806 the General As-

* *Assembly's Digest*, ed. of 1855, p. 376. † See p. 404.

‡ *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 419.

sembly urged upon the Presbyteries to report each year what they were doing for the selection of young men for the ministry, for their support, education and training, and reasons were demanded for neglect of this important duty. Those Presbyteries which did not render satisfactory excuses were liable to be recorded as delinquents in their duty or censured by the Assembly.*

When was the Theological Seminary at Princeton established?

In 1809 the Presbytery of Philadelphia sent an overture to the General Assembly for the establishment of a theological school. A committee on the subject was appointed. Its chairman was Rev. Dr. Dwight, President of Yale College, a delegate from the General Association of Connecticut. It reported three plans: (1) to establish one great school near the centre of the bounds of our Church; (2) two schools, one North and the other South; and (3) one school in each Synod, in which case each Synod should have the whole responsibility as to the formation and supervision of its school. According to the other plans, the General Assembly should have the control. These were referred to the Presbyteries, but without definite result. In 1810 the Assembly determined to establish a seminary "for securing to Candidates for the ministry more extensive and efficient theological instruction." The institution should have three Professors, but might begin with less. Its course should embrace divinity, Oriental and biblical literature, ecclesiastical history and church government, and such other subjects as might be deemed necessary. Efforts were to be made to give gratuitous instruction and support when necessary. A committee from each Synod was appointed to solicit funds.

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 397.

The Presbyteries were left at full liberty to send their students where they pleased for instruction, and to license those only whom they approved on examination; the seminary to have no such power. In 1811 the Trustees of the College of New Jersey made an offer to the General Assembly, which was accepted the next year. Its principal terms were: (1) that the seminary shall be in or near Princeton, and in connection with the college; (2) that the General Assembly shall appoint the Directors, choose Professors, determine the instruction, govern the students and manage the funds, without interference from the Trustees of the college; (3) that buildings needed for the seminary may be erected on the college grounds by the Assembly, or on land purchased in or near Princeton; (4) that the use of the college buildings shall be granted as far as practicable and as long as may be desired; (5) that the college will instruct at as little expense as possible young men sent to it by the Assembly or the Directors of the seminary; (6) the Trustees shall be ready to take charge of funds, separate from those of the college, subject to the order of the General Assembly; (7) free use of the college library shall be granted to the Professors and students. This connection between the college and seminary was to continue according to the pleasure of the Assembly, but it was agreed that "while the seminary shall remain in Princeton no professorship of theology shall be established in the college."* A missionary department was proposed as early as 1829. All the seminaries of the Church are alike in their plans of instruction and government.‡

What are synodical seminaries?

Each Presbytery and Synod was competent to adopt its

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 369–375.

† *Assembly's Digest*, p. 440. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 375-397.

own plan for the instruction of its Candidates. This was sanctioned by the General Assembly. Those seminaries which were under the control of Synods were called synodical seminaries. Among these were "the Union Seminary of the General Assembly, under the care of the Synods of Virginia and North Carolina;" Columbia Seminary, whose title was "the Theological Seminary of the Synods of South Carolina and Georgia;" the New Albany Seminary, which was under the care of seven Western Synods (and after its reorganization in 1854 under three Synods). These had the sanction of the General Assembly. The Seminary of the Synod of Kentucky, and the South-western Seminary, under the care of the Synod of Tennessee, were refused such recognition.* The Indiana Theological Seminary, at South Hanover, afterward moved to New Albany, was under the care of several Synods,† and the San Francisco Seminary was organized by the Synod of the Pacific.‡

What seminaries were under presbyterial supervision?

"The Seminary at Auburn was controlled by a Board of Commissioners elected by certain Presbyteries in Central and Western New York, and by a Board of Trustees elected by commissioners;"§ and the German Theological School was founded by the Presbytery of Newark, and the Biddle University at Charlotte, North Carolina.‖

What seminaries were independent?

"Lane Seminary, at Cincinnati, and Union Seminary, at New York, were founded by individuals, members of the Presbyterian Church." By their charters they were Presbyterian institutions, teaching our standards, but were

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 461–471. † See p. 313. ‡ See p. 314.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 384. ‖ See pp. 314, 315

not under ecclesiastical control.* Also the German Theological School of the North-west; and the Blackburn University, at Carlinville, Ill., which was founded by the Rev. G. Blackburn.†

What are fellowships?

There has been a desire to secure a high order of culture in biblical literature. To accomplish this, in 1876 "a Prize Fellowship Fund" was begun in Union Theological Seminary, and two fellowships more, of $10,000 each, were secured, to enable "students who shall be, in the judgment of the Faculty, most deserving, to prosecute their studies in this country or in foreign countries, under the direction of the Faculty, for the period of two years after graduation."‡ In the Princeton Seminary in 1880 a fellowship was secured yielding $600 in quarterly payments. It is offered to the member of the graduating class or to the resident graduate approved by the Faculty who shall stand highest in a special examination in April on Hebrew. He will be expected to spend at least one year in Old-Testament study under the direction of the Faculty, either in Princeton or in some foreign university.§ In 1881 the Assembly was "glad to notice that in two of our seminaries (Princeton and Union) fellowships are established, and we commend the example to other seminaries."‖

What are parochial schools?

In Scotland a statute was passed in 1696 directing that a school be established in every parish. The Pastor was entrusted with the superintendence and to appoint the teachers, and the Presbytery regulated the hours and

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 384.
† See p. 314.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1876*, p. 116.
§ *Ibid.*, *1880*, p. 94.
‖ *Ibid.*, *1881*, p. 577.

vacations, and could animadvert on the incumbent in all cases of just complaint; and its judgment was final. When the Free Church separated from the Established, it also adopted a similar system of parish schools under the supervision of the Pastors and Presbyteries. In 1844 the O. S. Assembly appointed a committee to consider the expediency of establishing Presbyterian parochial schools. The report was presented the next year, earnestly recommending their general introduction. In 1846 the Assembly resolved that education which does not include instruction in the Scriptures and the doctrines of grace is incomplete; that it approves of churches undertaking schools under their own direction; and that the whole subject of parochial education be commended to the serious attention of the Church and to the Board of Education. In 1847 the Assembly expressed its conviction "that the interests of the Church . . . . demanded that immediate and strenuous exertions should be made, so far as practicable, by every congregation, to establish within its bounds one or more primary schools under the care of the Session of the church, in which, together with the usual branches of secular learning, the truths and duties of our holy religion shall be assiduously inculcated." And Presbyteries and Synods were urged to "devise and execute whatever measures they may deem most appropriate for securing the establishment of parochial and presbyterial schools in our bounds." The Board of Education was called upon to obtain information and grant aid.*

When did the Board of Education give up their parochial schools?

The Board began at once, after the above resolutions

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 406–410. See p. 462.

were passed in 1847, to organize and aid parochial schools, and continued to do so for twenty years. In 1868 the annual report contains a summary of the work, and speaks of an increasing interest. The next year the Board reported the failure of the whole scheme, and mentioned the causes, especially the insuperable practical difficulties. No action was taken by the Assembly in regard to this part of the report. The Board had aided 17 colleges and seminaries, 58 academies and 131 parochial schools. At the reunion in 1870 nothing was said in regard to this part of the Board's work; the whole matter was dropped. In 1871 the sum of $2020 was "applied specially to the closing up of the schools formerly in connection with the Board."*

When was the Board of Education organized?

In 1819 the General Assembly, having been overtured, determined to organize the Board of Education. Its object was stated to be the assisting young men, "giving hopeful evidence of piety and promising talents," "to obtain all parts of an education necessary to their introduction to the pulpit, including both their classical and theological course." A constitution was framed, which afterward received but few modifications. A charter was obtained in 1841, under the direction of the O. S. Assembly.†

What is the American Education Society?

In 1815 a society was formed in Boston which was called "The American Society for Educating Pious Youth for the Gospel Ministry." The name was in 1820 changed into that of "The American Education Society." It was designed to be undenominational. Its supporters and

* *Minutes (O. S.) 1868*, pp. 609, 719; *1869*, p. 976; *1871*, p. 658.

† *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 399–403; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 353. See p. 305.

beneficiaries have been for the most part connected with the Congregational and Presbyterian churches. In 1818 "the Presbyterian Educational Society at New York" was formed, and in 1827 became a branch of the American Society, as did other similar bodies. In 1831 these branches received a modification of their relation to the parent society, especially the one in New York, which was enlarged in its influence in certain territorial limits, and reassumed its former title, "The Presbyterian Educational Society." It remained for many years as the Presbyterian branch of the American Educational Society.* In 1874 "The Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education" was united organically with the American Educational Society, whose name then became "The American College and Educational Society."†

What was the Western Educational Society?

From 1838 to 1854 the New School branch of the Church co-operated with the American Education and other voluntary societies. In 1852 the General Assembly recommended that in the West, where no such society existed, one should be formed, to be called "the Western Educational Society," whose annual meeting should be at the same time and place as those of the Assembly, and which should permit the members of the Assembly, *ex-officio*, to act as members of the society.‡

What was the Permanent Committee on Education?

At the disruption the New School General Assembly recommended the American Education Society to its Presbyteries and churches, and continued to do so for several years. But in 1852 it was resolved that the

* *Twenty-third Annual Report of the A. E. Society*, pp. 41–59.

† *Fifty-eighth Annual Report of the A. E. Society*, p. 19.

‡ *Presbyterian Reunion Memorial Volume*, p. 69.

Western Educational Society and all others should report every year to the Assembly, as far as their operations should relate to our Church. This led to the formation of the Permanent Committee on Education for the Ministry in 1856. It was located in New York, and its powers and duties were very like those of the O. S. Board of Education. The churches were recommended to sustain this committee, but were left free to "carry forward educational operations within their bounds through their own agencies and local organizations, and to assist their young men directly from their own funds and according to their own rules and regulations, or operate through the Assembly's committee, contributing their funds to the general treasury, and placing their Candidates under the patronage and supervision of the said committee." Arrangements were also to be made with the "Central American Educational Society at New York" and the "Philadelphia Educational Society" for harmonious co-operation. An act of incorporation was obtained in 1858.* In 1861 the plan of the committee was revised.†

What is "the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America"?

At the reunion this Board was formed by a consolidation of the (O. S.) Board of Education and the (N. S.) Permanent Committee on Education. All Presbyteries are expected to see that the churches under their care shall take up an annual collection for this cause. It is located in Philadelphia.†

How are applications for aid to be made to the Board?

(See pp. 306–311.)

* *Presbyterian Reunion Memorial Volume*, p. 69; *New Digest*, pp. 332, 410–423.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 355–361.

What change in the functions of the Board has been proposed?

A special committee on the functions of the Board of Education was appointed in 1877, and was continued until 1881, when it recommended (1) that this Board be the executive agency of our Church in all that pertains to the training of Candidates to the Ministry, "and the aid, upon proper conditions, of institutions of learning for the purpose, and also for all other educational measures which may from time to time be referred to the Board by the General Assembly;" (2) that a committee be appointed to revise the constitution of the Board, so as to enlarge its functions; (3) that the Board is directed to inaugurate a system for aid of colleges, including "that bequests and other contributions for this purpose be disbursed through the Board," and "that colleges receiving aid give to the Board satisfactory guarantees as to the wisdom of their location, their organization and their administration;" (4) that these funds be kept distinct from those for the aid of Candidates. The report, with these recommendations, was referred to a committee to report to the next Assembly.* To this same committee was referred a report from the Standing Committee of Home Missions, urging the appointment of a Permanent Committee on Education in the West, "to systematize this department of church work, to select the most desirable locations for such institutions of learning, with special reference to the supply of Missionaries and Teachers for the frontier, to devise means for their proper endowment, and to take charge of the funds until they are distributed and invested for the designated objects."* Steps were taken to aid a proposed college in India.† Appendix, p. 543.

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, pp. 581–584. † See p. 438.

What action has been taken in regard to female education?

The O. S. Assembly in 1849 warned parents against sending their children to Romish schools, as dangerous to the children and as a violation of the vows made in baptism.* In 1880 the Assembly resolved, "That in view of the close connection between our homes and congregations and the education of the girls born within our Church, this General Assembly commend to the confidence of our people the educational institutions which do their work in sympathy with the character and aims of our Church. And, further, that Ministers be urged to countenance, and in all fitting ways promote, the efficiency of ladies' schools, where they are needed in addition to our State institutions, in which the highest culture shall be accompanied and leavened by the evangelical faith and worship of our Church."†

Board of Publication.

What early measures were taken by the Church to procure the publication of religious books?

In 1735 the members of Synod were required to submit to a committee for examination and approval whatever they may prepare upon any controversy in religious matters before they shall publish the same. In 1772 a committee was appointed to consider the necessity of procuring religious books for distribution on the frontier and in poor c ngregations. The Synod ordered a general collection from the churches, a pastoral letter to the congregations, and that a committee be authorized to procure and distribute the following books, not to exceed ten pounds currency each in purchasing them: Bibles, "West-

* *Pres. Digest*, p. 673. † *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 71; *1881*, p. 584.

minster Confession of Faith," small editions of Vincent's "Catechism," Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion," "A Compassionate Address to the Christian World," Allein's "Alarm to the Unconverted," Dr. Watts's "Divine Songs for Children," and the Assembly's "Catechism." Other books and pamphlets donated, "which they judge will answer the intention of the Synod to promote Christian knowledge," they could also distribute. The next year two committees, one in Philadelphia and the other in New York, were appointed to procure books to give to the poor. In 1803 application was made by the Presbytery of Erie for Bibles and other pious books, to be used as a circulating library "for the spiritual edification of the numerous poor and ignorant persons in that place who are perishing for lack of knowledge." *

How were Bibles procured for distribution?

A committee of three Ministers was appointed in 1783 by the Synod to receive contributions for the purchase of Bibles; and for certain reasons the Synod ordered that the committee shall procure its supply of Bibles only from an American impression executed by Mr. Aitken.† At the first meeting of the General Assembly (1789), Mr. Collins, a printer in the State of New Jersey, proposed to make an impression of the Old and New Testaments, and desired the countenance and support of our Church and of all denominations of Christians. A committee of sixteen was appointed to procure subscriptions. Dr. John Witherspoon, Dr. Samuel S. Smith and Rev. James F. Armstrong were appointed "to concur with such committee as may be appointed, whether from any other denomination or from any other Synod of our denomina-

* *Records of Presbyterian Church*, pp. 117, 428, 429, 441; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 413. † *Records of Presbyterian Church*, p. 500.

tion, to revise and correct the proof-sheets, and, if necessary, to fix upon the most correct edition of the Scriptures to be recommended to the printer from which to make his impression." The suggestion was also made that Ostervald's notes be printed with it, if not inconsistent with the views of the denominations joining in the enterprise.*

When was the first Bible society formed?

As early as 1698 there was in Great Britain a Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, from which sprang others in different parts of the kingdom. These embraced the circulation of the Bible as one of their objects. "The British and Foreign Bible Society" was organized in 1804 with a fund of £700. Its executive committee consisted of fifteen Church-of-England laymen, fifteen dissenters and six foreigners. It at once published an edition of 20,000 Bibles and 5000 Testaments. Auxiliaries were formed at home and on the Continent.†

When was the American Bible Society organized?

In 1808 the Bible Society of Philadelphia was formed. The next year there was organized one in Connecticut and one in Massachusetts. In 1813 one was formed in Halifax, and in 1814 one in Antigua. In 1816 "The American Bible Society" was organized in New York; its receipts the first year were $37,779, and it sent forth 6410 volumes.† The same year the General Assembly recorded its gratification and heartfelt pleasure in hearing "of the formation of the American Bible Society a few days since in the city of New York, and from the unanimity manifested by all denominations of Christians on that occasion, the fervor of zeal displayed and eagerness manifested by the numerous and highly respectable delegation which attended to combine their exertions in

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 415. † *American Cyclopædia.*

promoting the best interest of their fellow-men by furnishing them with the bread of life, they cannot but believe that it is the work of God—that it will stand, and prove a rich blessing to those who may enjoy the fruits of its exertions." *

What is the Authorized Version of the Bible?

It is that which is called "King James's Version," or the version of 1611. The Bible Society is required by its charter to print no other. It is the one authorized to be read in the churches in England and this country. In 1870, at the Convocation of Canterbury, the Anglo-American Revision originated, which is commonly called the "New Version." The plan was started by the Church of England, but soon after the organization of the English Committee an invitation was sent to American scholars to co-operate. A similar committee, of about thirty, was formed here in 1871. Dr. Green of Princeton was made Chairman of the Old-Testament Company, and Ex-President Woolsey of New Haven of the New-Testament Company. The New Testament was completed and approved by the English and American Committees in 1880. It was printed in Oxford and Cambridge, and issued simultaneously in England and in this country. It appeared during the session of the General Assembly in 1881. The revision of the Old Testament is still progressing.†

When was the first Tract Society formed?

The societies in Great Britain, called "Societies for Promoting Christian Knowledge," above referred to, had as one of their objects the distribution of "tracts of religion." In 1750 the "Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor" was the first publishing

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 416.

† *Companion to the Revised Version.*

society composed of different denominations uniting to promote the circulation of religious books and tracts In 1756 similar societies were formed in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Miss Hannah More in 1795 began the "Cheap Repository Tracts," among which was "The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain." In 1793 the "Religious Tract Society," or, as it is now called, the "Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland," was established. "The Religious Tract Society of London" was founded in 1799. The first religious publication society in the United States was the "Methodist Book Concern," organized in Philadelphia in 1789; it was afterward moved to New York. Rev. Dr. Jedidiah Morse of Charlestown, Mass., in 1802 published editions of 19 tracts, amounting to 32,806 copies, which were distributed mostly in Maine, Kentucky and Tennessee. The next year the "Massachusetts Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge" was founded by him and others. From this time until 1814 many similar tract societies were formed in the different States.*

When was the American Tract Society organized?

In 1814 the "New England Religious Tract Society" was originated at Andover, by Rev. E. Porter, D. D., and Rev. Justin Edwards, D. D., with some of the Professors of the seminary there. In 1823 its name was changed to "American Tract Society." Its depository was at Andover until 1825, and then transferred to Boston. In the spring of 1825 the "American Tract Society" was organized in New York, with the intention of uniting all local societies as auxiliaries. The one in Boston became a branch of it, selling its plates and publications to it at cost.* This union was interrupted in 1859, but reestablished in 1878.

* *American Cyclopædia.*

When did the Presbyterian Church take action on the publication of tracts?

In 1809 the General Assembly recommended that each Synod should establish as many tract societies as might be most convenient, and upon such plans as the Synods might think best.*

What was "the Presbyterian Tract and Sabbath-school Book Society"?

In 1833 the Synod of Philadelphia organized this society, under its supervision, to publish tracts and books for the destitute and for the young, which should inculcate the doctrines taught in our standards.†

What was "the Board of Publication of Tracts and Sabbath-school Books"?

Immediately after the disruption the O. S. Assembly founded this Board, locating it in Philadelphia. This was done because of the evident importance of diffusing sound and scriptural principles, and because it is the duty of the highest judicatory of the Church to superintend and conduct, by its own authority, the work of furnishing suitable publications. The Board was composed of eighty members. To the Executive Committee belonged the duty of selecting and preparing proper tracts and books. Its property was held by the Trustees of the Assembly. And the "Presbyterian Tract and Sabbath-school Book Society" was transferred from the care of the Synod of Philadelphia and merged into this Board, under the care of the Assembly.‡

What was "the Presbyterian Board of Publication"?

In 1839 the "Board of Publication of Tracts and Sabbath-school Books" received some alterations in its con-

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 415. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 435.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 433.

stitution. Its name was changed to "the Presbyterian Board of Publication," and it was authorized to publish approved works in support of the great principles of the Reformation, of the doctrine and polity of our Church, and of periodicals teaching sound learning and true religion. In 1841 congregational libraries, composed of the publications of the Board and under the direction of the Session, were recommended. In 1843 the Assembly approved of the establishing of depositories in the different Synods and Presbyteries.* Its property continued under the care of the Trustees of the Assembly until 1847, when a charter was obtained incorporating the "Trustees of the Presbyterian Board of Publication."†

What was the "Doctrinal Tract Committee"?

In 1846 an overture on the subject of doctrinal tracts was brought before the N. S. General Assembly. The subject was referred to a committee, but nothing was done until 1852, when "the Doctrinal Tract Committee" was formed "to superintend the publication of a series of tracts explanatory of the doctrines, government and mission policy of the Presbyterian Church." It was located in Philadelphia. No tract could be published until it was unanimously approved by the committee. This rule was afterward changed, so that only a three-fourths vote was necessary, and still later a mere majority was sufficient. Often the committee is called in the Minutes the "Standing Committee for the Preparation and Publishing of Doctrinal Tracts." Books as well as tracts were prepared by it. All its publications were in 1854 ordered to appear simultaneously in New York and Philadelphia.‡

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 419. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p 441.
‡ *New Digest*, pp. 394 397.

What was "the Presbyterian Publication Committee"?

In 1855 the name of the Doctrinal Tract Committee was changed to the "Presbyterian Publication Committee." In 1857 it was authorized "to publish not only such works as may present the peculiarities of our branch of the Christian Church in doctrine and practice, but from time to time such works of an evangelical character as may be profitable to the Church at large." This committee was not incorporated. But in 1855 an act was passed by the Legislature of Pennsylvania incorporating "the Trustees of the Presbyterian House," to hold property and secure "some suitable place for the business of the societies and churches connected with the Assembly." These Trustees were authorized, in their corporate capacity as Trustees of the Presbyterian Publication Committee, as fully and in the same manner as if that committee was itself constituted a corporation by the same authority.* The property Nos. 1334 and 1336 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, was purchased, and the houses remodeled for the use above described.

What is "the Presbyterian Board of Publication"?

At the reunion in 1869 it was resolved that the corporate rights of the boards and committees of the two Assemblies should be, as far as practicable, consolidated, and that the (O. S.) Board of Publication and the (N. S.) Presbyterian Publication Committee should be reconstructed as soon as possible; but that in the mean time they should continue to issue their publications until consolidated, and until the new Board could perfect a catalogue for the united Church, so as to exclude invidious references to past controversies.† In 1870 the Presbyterian

* *New Digest*, pp. 398, 400, 404–409; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 435–437

† See p. 265.

Board of Publication and the Presbyterian Publication Committee were united under the name of the "Presbyterian Board of Publication." All the members of these old bodies were discontinued, and forty-eight members, in equal numbers from each of the late branches of the Church, were chosen. All the internal arrangements necessary for carrying on the work were left to the decision of the new Board. All the properties belonging to the former Board and Committee were placed in possession of the "Trustees of the Presbyterian Board of Publication," incorporated in 1847. The said Board of Trustees was made to represent equally both former branches of the Church. This was done by filling vacancies caused by deaths and resignations. The Trustees of the Presbyterian House conveyed to this Board the house and lot Nos. 1334 and 1336 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia. This building was to be rebuilt, suited to the wants of the reunited Church. The house No. 821 Chestnut Street, already owned by the Board, was ordered to be sold.*

How many departments has the Board?

1. The Publication Department. "This is carried forward upon a capital raised for that special purpose," and is conducted upon strictly business principles, and not only sustains itself by the sale of books and periodicals, but often contributes, from its profits, sums to the other departments of the Board. The character of the books published is determined by the General Assembly.† Special directions have been given, as for the publication of certain books and tracts in foreign languages and for special classes. In 1880 "the Board was enjoined to

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 92, 437–440. See p. 417.

† See from p. 417. *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 433.

exercise continued caution and unceasing vigilance, lest at any time its press should send forth publications casting the slightest doubt upon the divine authority and plenary inspiration of the Bible, or upon the divinity and atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ, or upon the fact of man's utter ruin by sin, and his absolute need of redemption through the blood shed upon the cross. If the truth must be taught in the form of fiction, at least it must be truth; and, in the judgment of your committee, no book professing to contain religious truth should be published by the Board unless it also contains enough of the gospel to show a child how to be saved."*

2. The Missionary Department. "The department having this work in charge shall be separately constituted, and shall keep a distinct account with the Board. It shall be its duty to disseminate the publications of the Board by donations to Ministers and to needy churches, and by sale through its appointees, who shall be called the Missionaries of the Board of Publication, and who shall be appointed subject to the approval, and shall be under the control, of the Presbyteries."† In 1878 the Assembly was asked to consider the desirableness of an organic separation between the missionary and business departments of the Board, and replied: "As these departments are already practically separated and distinct, and as no part of the missionary fund is used in the business department, but, on the contrary, all the expenses of the missionary department are more than paid for by the contributions from the business department; therefore resolved, That it would be unwise to make any change."‡ This department is sustained by annual

* *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 28; Appendix, p. 541.
† *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 45. ‡ *Ibid., 1878*, p. 29.

contributions from the churches, as ordered by the General Assembly. "All contributions to the missionary fund are used exclusively to carry forward the Board's missionary and Sabbath-school work, in supporting the book, tract and Sabbath-school Missionaries, in paying for the books and tracts given away, and such other expenses as belong legitimately to this benevolent branch of the Board's work."*

In the organization of the Board at the reunion this necessity was recognized—"the maintenance of a force of colporteurs sufficiently large to reach the outlying population of the land by the gospel, and to prepare the way for the establishment of churches wherever they may be made permanent and effectual."† In 1881 the Assembly appointed a committee of seven "to consider and report to the next Assembly what changes and measures, if any, are needed in order to increase the work and the efficiency of the missionary department of the Board of Publication."‡ Appendix, p. 540.

What is colportage?

A system adopted by the Board, with the approbation of the O. S. Assembly, in 1847, by which its publications were carried by men commissioned as colporteurs to the destitute, for gratuitous distribution and for sale.§ After the reunion the Standing Committee in this Board in 1871 stated that "they are convinced, from all the light which they have been able to obtain, that the colporteur system of distribution is essential to the efficiency of this Board, and that instead of being diminished it ought to be largely increased." The Assembly therefore

* *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 152.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 438. See p. 424.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 556.

§ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 420

resolved, "That the Board of Publication be recommended to prosecute with increased energy the work of distribution by an efficient and economical system of colportage, under the direction of the several Presbyteries." *

The colporteurs are commissioned by the Board, and receive salaries for their labor. They work under the supervision of the Presbyteries, who are urged by the Assembly, wherever the work is prosecuted, to "give to it prompt and thorough inspection, exercising presbyterial supervision most thoroughly." Any one proving inefficient or unfaithful must be reported to the Board, and his commission at once withdrawn. Their duties consist in visiting from house to house the destitute in a certain district, holding religious conversation in the families, praying with them, and in selling or donating the publications of the Board. In 1874 it was also made their special duty to organize Sabbath-schools in destitute localities and foster those already established. These colporteurs were in 1874 ordered to be called "the Missionaries of the Board of Publication." † In 1881 these Missionaries reported that during the year they had distributed by sale 71,396 volumes, and by gift 25,057 volumes and 4,652,744 pages of tracts. They visited 72,106 families, with most of whom they held religious conversation and prayer.‡ From 1874 to 1880 they visited and aided 8205 Sabbath-schools, and organized 474 new schools in destitute places.§ In 1881 it was resolved that the churches "be expected to give a larger study and affection to the missionary work of the Board." The Board was requested "to consider whether a reduction of the number of the District Superintendents might not

* *Minutes G. A. 1871*, pp. 527, 528. § *Ibid., 1880*, p. 151.
‡ *Ibid., 1881*, p. 665. † *Ibid., 1874*, pp. 31, 60; Appendix, p. 541.

be made without impairing the efficiency of the missionary department of the Board;" and a committee was appointed "to consider and report to the next Assembly what changes and measures, if any, are needed in order to increase the work and the efficiency of the missionary department." *

In regard to the Sabbath-school work, the Board has always paid special attention to the publication of books for the young. In 1871 it was resolved that the Board, so enlarged in the sphere of its operations, keep before it these three branches of the Sabbath-school work:

a. "To furnish a complete literature for Sabbath-schools, consisting of its own and other well-selected books for libraries, helps of all kinds for the study of the Scriptures and Catechism, periodicals for teachers and scholars, and all other apparatus fitted to give efficiency to the work of teaching." Appendix, p. 520.

b. "To establish such agencies as it may deem suitable for elevating the standard of teaching and more thoroughly developing the great idea of Sabbath-schools —that of imparting the knowledge of God to the young and drawing them to the salvation of Christ."

c. "In appointing colporteurs, as far as possible to select such persons as may also be suitable for Sabbath-school Missionaries, and instruct them to establish Sabbath-schools in destitute localities, under the supervision of the Presbyteries." † In 1874 the Assembly resolved that the missionary department of the Board "shall supervise the whole Sabbath-school work of the Church in connection with the Presbyteries, and it shall aim to lift this important agency of Christian evangelization into the prominence and efficiency which it deserves, and which the great needs of our own country have so

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 555. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 440.

largely called for at the present time. And furthermore, in addition to the amount appropriated by the Board from the collections made by the churches, it shall receive and apply donations specifically designated for the Sabbath-school work."* In 1871 the Assembly approved of the appointment by the Board of a general Superintendent of Sabbath-school work, and requested the Sabbath-schools of our Church to contribute at least once a year to this department of the Board. In 1878 Presbyteries were urged "to appoint a committee or presbyterial Superintendent, whose duty it shall be to oversee and encourage, as far as may be, the Sabbath-schools in the bounds of the Presbytery, and especially to take order for collecting and transmitting to the General Superintendent the statistics of each school."† In 1880 the Assembly recommended that the Superintendent "be appointed by the General Assembly Secretary of the Sabbath-school work of the Board."‡ In 1881 the Assembly renewed "the earnest recommendations of former Assemblies as to sessional control of Sabbath-schools, . . . the collection of Sabbath-school statistics, and the use of the periodical Sabbath-school literature of the Board in the family as well as in the school." Sabbath-schools were "requested to aid the Board by the purchase of its books, by the use of its periodicals and by contributions to its missionary fund." And "that the Board be directed to appoint from their own number a Standing Committee of seven to advise and consult with the Secretary of Sabbath-school work."§

What is the Sabbath-school Normal Class?

From the outset, the Superintendent of Sabbath-school work has pressed upon the Church the necessity and

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, pp. 31, 45.
† *Ibid., 1878*, p. 25.
‡ *Ibid., 1880*, p. 27.
§ *Ibid., 1881*, p. 555.

importance of the more thorough preparation of teachers for the Sabbath-school. In 1879 he began a normal class, under the auspices of the Presbyteries of Philadelphia, in the assembly-room of the Publication House. It was well attended by Pastors, Superintendents and Teachers. A three years' course of normal-class instructions was prepared, and the subjects announced for the first year. The Assembly approved of this action, and "earnestly recommended the formation of normal classes wherever practicable."* In 1881 the holding of Sabbath-school institutes and conventions and the general organization of normal classes were urged.† App., p. 541.

The Board of Foreign Missions.

How early did Protestant churches turn their attention to missions?

At the Reformation the principal work before the Protestant churches was necessarily internal, developing their doctrine, polity and worship. Their external work was principally defending themselves from civil, intellectual and religious attacks, and winning Romanists to the truth. Yet Luther often reminded Christians of "the misery of pagans and Turks," and urged them to send Missionaries to them. Calvin sent fourteen spiritual teachers with a small French colony in 1555 to Brazil, to teach the Reformed religion there. This first Protestant mission was short-lived. In 1664, Ernest von Wels urged the formation of a "Jesus Association" for the propagation of Christianity among the pagans, but he was regarded as a fanatic. Soon after the settlement of New England, John Eliot became deeply interested in the spiritual condition of the Indians, and in 1646 formally entered upon

* *Minutes G. A. 1879*, pp. 558, 700. † *Ibid., 1881*, p. 555.

his mission among them, "with the Mohegan version of the Bible as the fruit of his own unaided labors." This mission continued for many years, and met with wonderful success. Cromwell conceived the plan of uniting all the Protestant churches in the world into one great missionary society, and that the whole earth be divided into four missionary provinces. In 1701 some members of the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge" formed themselves into a committee "for sending Missionaries to the pagans," and took the name of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts." It was and is under the control of the Church of England. The "Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge" was formed in 1709, and labored chiefly among the American Indians. But little was really done by the Protestant churches until the close of the eighteenth century, except by the Moravians, whose success was wonderful in the West Indies, Greenland, North and South America.

A new interest in the cause of missions began about 1790, which led to the formation of the "Baptist Missionary Society of England" in 1792, principally through the influence of William Carey, who became the first English Missionary to India. In 1795 the "London Missionary Society" was formed, its members belonging to four different denominations, and twenty-nine young men were sent to its first mission-field, the islands of the Pacific. In 1799 "the Church Missionary Society" was organized. Its management has always been in the hands of the Low-Church party; its Missionaries must subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles and submit to Episcopal ordination. The Methodists organized a missionary society at Leeds in 1814, which soon became very efficient. A

"Scotch Missionary Society" was formed in 1796. But the General Assembly the same year declared the idea of sending Missionaries among the pagans to be folly. This was, however, reversed in 1824, and the Assembly in 1829 sent Dr. Duff, its first Missionary, to India.*

What was done by the American churches?

The condition of the Indians early attracted the attention of the churches planted in this country. The example of John Eliot was followed by many others in different colonies.†

What early efforts were made by the Presbyterian Church?

At the first meeting of the General Presbytery of which we have any record (1707) the missionary character and duty of the Church was recognized. At the first meeting of the Synod (1717) a fund for pious uses was raised; this was yearly continued by collections from the churches. In 1742 a Missionary to the Indians was ordained. The first formal act of the Synod concerning foreign missions was in 1751. "The exigences of the great affair of propagating the gospel among the heathen being represented to the Synod, the Synod, in order to promote so important and valuable a design, do enjoin all their members to appoint a collection in their several congregations once every year, to be applied for that purpose, and that the money raised by such collections be yearly sent to the Synod." The next year this is called "the collection for the Indians." In 1755, "Mr. Gilbert Tennent reported to the Synod that he has lately received a bill for two hundred pounds sterling, generously given for the propagation of the gospel among the Indians, and to be under the direction of this Synod." This money was contributed in Great Britain, and was invested with the Trustees

* *American Cyclopædia.* † See p. 426.

of the New Jersey College, and the interest of it was yearly used to sustain the missions among the Indians. The first Missionary seems to have been Rev. David Brainard, who labored among the Indians in New Jersey. This mission was continued until 1781.*

How were these missions conducted?

They were under the supervision of the Synod, and appropriations were yearly made from the "fund for Indians" and the collections from the churches. The Missionaries were appointed by the Synod. In 1768 a committee of twelve members of Synod was formed and ordered to meet at Elizabethtown, "to draw up and concert a general plan to be laid before this Synod at their next meeting, to be approved by them, in order to prepare the way to propagate the gospel among these benighted people" (the Western Indians). Nothing, however, was done.† When the General Assembly was formed in 1788, missions among the Western Indians were maintained by the Synod of Virginia, and upon the division of that Synod these missions fell to the Synod of Pittsburg. Other missions were conducted by other Synods, as among the Southern Indians by the Synod of the Carolinas. Reports were annually made to the General Assembly by the Synods, who appointed the Missionaries and directed the work through a Committee of Missions and a Board of Trust. The General Assembly ordered its Trustees to make appropriations to these Synods to further the work. In 1806 the Synod of Pittsburg desired the General Assembly to take their missions under its immediate care, but it was not thought expedient to do so at that time. In 1825 these were transferred to the United

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 245, 248, 266, 269.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 380, 391.

Foreign Missionary Society.* In 1791 the following resolution was passed: "Resolved, That the Synod of the Carolinas be allowed so to manage the matter of sending Missionaries to places destitute of the gospel and its ordinances as may appear to that Synod most conducive to the interest of religion within their bounds; provided, that the above Synod send annually to this Assembly a particular account of their proceedings on the above subject, with a regular statement of the money that may be collected and disbursed for the support of the above Missionaries." †

What recent action has been taken in regard to the Indian?

The Assembly of 1880, in reply to overtures, resolved, "That, recognizing the fact that the relations and duties of our country to the Indians have long occupied the serious and careful attention of the United States government, the Assembly express the earnest hope and desire that as rapidly as possible there may be (1) an extension of law over the Indian tribes, giving to them its protection and making them amenable thereto; (2) an individual ownership of land guaranteed to them, and made inalienable for a term of years; (3) the support, by the General Government, of common schools among them; and (4) the securing to the Indians of the enjoyment of full religious liberty." A committee was appointed to present the above resolution and urge the government to take action to promote the welfare of the Indian. They had an interview with the President, and laid before him a memorial. The committee reported the next year, and was continued, and increased by the addition of five members.‡

* See p. 433. † *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 329–336, 342.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 75; *1881*, pp. 565–568.

When was "the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" organized?

It was organized in 1810. It was the first missionary society formed in this country. "It owed its origin to a society of students of Andover Theological Seminary, among whom was Adoniram Judson, whose object was to investigate the best ways and means of making the gospel known to pagan nations." It had no denominational basis, but was sustained by the Congregational, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed and other churches.* For many years the Presbyterian Church co-operated with it, and as late as 1836 the Assembly declared, "That whatever advantages or disadvantages may have resulted from the division of the Church into numerous denominations with conflicting opinions, it cannot be our duty, as Christians, to perpetuate and extend these divisions by incorporating them in our arrangements to spread the gospel in heathen lands." After the division the New School branch continued to co-operate until the reunion.†

What was "the Standing Committee on Foreign Missions"?

The N. S. Assembly co-operated with the A. B. C. F. M. up to the time of the reunion. But in 1850 the subject of the "erection of Presbyteries in foreign lands" was referred to a committee. No definite action was taken until 1854, it having been found that under the rules of the A. B. C. F. M. it was impracticable to organize Presbyteries and Presbyterian churches on foreign ground. A Standing Committee was formed to correspond with the Prudential Committee of the A. B. C. F. M. and with Presbyterian Missionaries on the subject, and report annually.‡

* *American Cyclopœdia.* † *Assembly's Digest*, p. 373.
‡ *New Digest*, p. 424.

What was the "Permanent Committee on Foreign Missions"?

The Standing Committee was in 1856 enlarged and called the "Permanent Committee." Its duties were increased by requiring an annual report as to the missionary operations in which Presbyterian churches were engaged, the number of Presbyterian Ministers and Candidates in foreign fields, the amount of collections from churches, and the interest taken by the denomination. In 1859 several overtures urged the Assembly to form a closer connection with its foreign Missionaries, and to form Presbyteries on foreign ground. One reminded the Assembly "that after contributing millions of money we have not a solitary mission church, or but one, in the entire foreign field," and suggested "that a portion of the foreign field be set apart (by the A. B. C. F. M.) to be occupied exclusively by Missionaries of our Church." Another urged direct control of our Missionaries as to their ecclesiastical relations. The Assembly resolved that these overtures demanded consideration and action, and that, while desiring to perpetuate co-operation with the A. B. C. F. M., the Assembly recorded its judgment, as due to the interest of the Church, that the Board should interpose no obstacle in the way of the formation of foreign Presbyteries; that Missionaries should be so appointed as to facilitate the organizing of such Presbyteries; and that there be free correspondence between the Missionaries and the Permanent Committee. The Board professed its desire to further these views, and the Missionaries "in some fields were preparing to perpetuate in foreign countries our excellent Presbyterian polity." The Synod of New York and New Jersey were empowered to form and receive foreign Presbyteries. It was

further resolved that it was inexpedient "to initiate any new and independent foreign missionary undertaking." In 1860 the question was again considered, "whether as a denomination we can continue to work with the American Board, or whether the time has come to initiate a system under which we can more rapidly and fully develop the strength and spirit of our people." The Permanent Committee continued its work until the reunion.*

In 1865 it obtained a charter, by which it was incorporated to hold property for foreign missionary purposes. Its "duty shall be to superintend the whole cause of foreign missions in behalf of the said General Assembly as said General Assembly may from time to time direct, also to receive, take charge of and disburse any property or funds . . . entrusted to said General Assembly or said Permanent Committee for foreign missionary purposes."* Yet the Permanent Committee did not undertake all the work provided for in its charter, but to the last its functions were not to raise and distribute funds or conduct missions, but to supervise the part of the work belonging to the Presbyterian Church, and to report to the Assembly the results.†

What other missionary societies were formed early in the century?

The American Baptist Missionary Union was formed in 1814, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1819, and the Protestant Episcopal Church organized its Board in 1820.‡

What was "the United Foreign Missionary Society"?

The committee which reported in 1816 to the General

* *New Digest*, pp. 425–433; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 431–433.

† *Presbyterian Reunion Memorial Volume*, p. 92.

‡ *American Cyclopædia.*

Assembly the plan by which the Committee of Missions were erected into the Board of Missions* considered the propriety of directing that Board to undertake foreign as well as home missions, but thought it more desirable that a society be formed, including also the Dutch Reformed, the Associate Reformed and other churches holding the same creed. This suggestion led the next year to the formation of the "United Foreign Missionary Society." The object was "to spread the gospel among the Indians of North America, the inhabitants of Mexico and South America, and in other portions of the heathen and anti-Christian world." It was required to present "annual reports to the highest judicatories of the three denominations." It was located in New York, and the Missionaries were "chosen from the three churches indiscriminately"—"viz., Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed and Associate Reformed." This society continued until 1826, when, according to its request and that of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the Assembly consented to the union of the two societies.†

Did the Assembly relinquish the work of foreign missions?

In 1812 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions suggested to the Assembly the expediency of its forming an institution similar to theirs, which might co-operate with them in work among the unevangelized nations. But the Assembly declined to do so, because "the business of foreign missions may probably be best managed under the direction of a single Board;" it was "inconvenient to undertake the work while pressed with the domestic missions, and because missionary societies have been lately instituted in various places

* See p. 388. † *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 337–341.

within our bounds." In 1817, however, it did, with other churches, form the "United Foreign Missionary Society," and sustained it until it was united in 1826 with the American Board.* The subject was considered again in 1828, when the Assembly resolved, "That the Board of Missions already have the power to establish missions, not only among the destitute in our own country, but also among the heathen in any part of the world. . . . It is therefore submitted to the discretion of the Board of Missions to consider whether it is expedient for them to carry into effect the full powers which they possess."† In 1831 an overture on foreign missions was presented, and a committee was appointed to confer with the American Board. The report of this committee was considered the next year, and the Assembly expressed no opinion on its principles, but cordially renewed its recommendation of the American Board to the affections and patronage of the churches.‡

What was the "Western Foreign Missionary Society"?

It was anticipated by some that the committee appointed in 1831 to confer with the American Board would attempt to form a treaty with that Board tending to preclude our Church from engaging in its own capacity in the work. To prevent this, the Synod of Pittsburg in 1831 organized itself into the "Western Foreign Missionary Society." The Assembly hailed with pleasure the interest in foreign missions thus manifested by that Synod. In 1835 the Assembly declared that "it is believed to be among the causes of the frowns of the great Head of the Church which are now resting on our beloved Zion . . . that we have done so little, comparatively noth-

* *New Digest*, p. 347. † *Assembly's Digest*, p. 354.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

ing in our *distinctive character* as a Church of Christ, to send the gospel to the heathen, the Jews and the Mohammedans. It is regarded as of vital importance to the welfare of our Church that foreign as well as domestic missions should be more zealously prosecuted and more liberally patronized; and that, as a nucleus of foreign missionary effort and operation, the 'Western Foreign Missionary Society' should receive the countenance, as it appears to us to merit the confidence, of those who cherish an attachment to the doctrines and order of the Church to which we belong." A committee was appointed to confer with the Synod of Pittsburg, and "authorized, if they shall approve of the said transfer" (of the "Western Missionary Society" to the supervision of the Assembly), "to ratify and confirm the same with the said Synod, and report the same to the next General Assembly." In 1836 the committee reported that terms for the transfer had been agreed upon, and the Synod of Pittsburg had ratified them; and it was proposed at once to organize a "Board of Foreign Missions" to direct the work and take possession of the property thus transferred to the Assembly. After a long debate it was decided, by a majority of four, not to consent to the transfer, on the ground that the powers granted to the committee were "altogether unusual and unwarranted," and that the command to preach to every creature was given "not to the Presbyterian Church in her distinctive ecclesiastical capacity, but to the whole Church, to the collective body of Christ's disciples of every name." In 1837, however, the Assembly did organize a "Board of Foreign Missions," and the Synod of Pittsburg immediately surrendered to it all its missions and property. Its Corresponding Secretary was called to the same office in the Board, and the "Western

Foreign Missionary Chronicle" was adopted as the official organ of the Board.*

What is the "Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America"?

The subject of foreign missions was again brought before the Assembly in 1837 by an overture from the Presbytery of Salem. It was determined (yeas 108, nays 29) "that the General Assembly will superintend and conduct by its own proper authority the work of foreign missions of the Presbyterian Church by a Board appointed for that purpose and directly amenable to said Assembly." The Board was composed of eighty members, afterward increased to one hundred and twenty. Its name was "the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." Its Executive Committee consisted of nine members, besides the Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer, and appointed the Missionaries and took the oversight of the work. The property for a time was held by the Trustees of the Assembly. The Board was located in New York, but its first meeting was held in Baltimore.† This Board continued its work until the reunion, sustained by the O. S. churches, and since 1870 it has been the Board of the whole Church. Particular churches and individuals are of course at liberty to contribute to other societies. At the reunion an amicable arrangement was made with the American Board, by which five of its most successful missions, with their forty-three Missionaries and a large number of native Licentiates and Helpers, were transferred to our Board. ‡

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 364–374.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 430, 431.

‡ *Minutes G. A. 1871*, p. 534.

What changes were made in the Board of Foreign Missions at the reunion?

The Board shall consist of fifteen members, besides its Corresponding Secretaries and Treasurer, five to be elected each year. One of its *ex-officio* members shall be a corresponding member of General Assembly on all subjects relating to foreign missions. "Besides the duties already committed to their charge, the Board shall perform the duties heretofore assigned to the Executive Committee of the Board and to the Permanent Committe on Foreign Missions, in so far as these have not been superseded or modified by this minute."*

What has the Board to do with education?

The Board has the supervision of all the work of the Church in the foreign missionary field. Much attention is given to the education of children and to raising a native ministry. In 1881 the Board was "directed to correspond with the Boards of the other churches represented in the Presbyterian Alliance of India, informing them of our approval of the proposed theological college at Allahabad, and assuring them of our earnest co-operation in the establishment and support of the proposed college; and to report the results of such correspondence to the next Assembly."†

What is women's work in foreign missions?

(See p. 398.) In 1871 the women's foreign missionary societies raised $7000, and in 1875, $96,000. In that year the Assembly referred to their great efficiency and usefulness, and recommended the formation of societies auxiliary in all our churches. In 1879 the Board of Foreign Missions reported that there were then seven women's Boards auxiliary to it, whose efforts for the

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 432. † *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 590.

spiritually destitute women in heathen lands have been very fruitful: The Woman's Foreign Mission Society, Philadelphia; Woman's Board of Missions of the North-west; Ladies' Board of Missions of New York; Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, Albany Branch; Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, Troy Branch; Home and Foreign Mission Society, Brooklyn; and Board of Missions of the South-west. These raised during that year $136,309.69.* It is becoming a custom to hold a convention of these and other societies for women's work for women during the session of the General Assembly, in a church in the same city. The one held in 1881 was very largely attended and was of great interest.

Board of Church Erection.

What early measures were taken to aid Church Erection?

In 1733 it was overtured "that something be allowed to the congregations of Baskingridge and Perth Amboy, in pursuance of their applications for that purpose, in order to assist them in defraying the charges of their meeting-houses; . . . all which was referred to the Committee of the Fund" for Pious Uses. In 1775 a similar application for aid was received from the congregation at Salem, Mass., to assist in rebuilding their meeting-house, which had been destroyed by fire. This was urged by the Presbytery of Boston. The Synod "recommended them as an object of charity, hoping all persons of ability will contribute to their relief."†

What was the Church Extension Committee?

In 1843 an overture was presented to the O. S. Assembly respecting the erection of churches for feeble

* *Minutes G. A. 1875*, pp. 496, 499; *1879*, p. 572.

† *Assembly's Digest*, p. 421.

congregations. A committee was appointed to consider the matter and report to the next Assembly. It did so, and the Assembly expressed its judgment that suitable houses for worship were necessary, and that each congregation, if able, should erect its own. But as it is the duty of the whole Church to aid feeble churches to sustain a Minister, so is it to assist such churches to build proper houses in which to worship. As this work is so intimately connected with that of the Board of Missions, it was referred, until otherwise ordered, to that Board, who should report annually concerning it. The Board was required to appoint each year a "Committee on Church Extension," composed of five persons, who were to have charge of appropriating moneys received for this purpose, and procure and furnish at cost or gratuitously plans and estimates for buildings, on application. The Board of Missions was required to make rules for the committee in receiving applications, obtaining funds and making appropriations. Collections for the object were ordered to be made yearly in the churches. In 1854 the Assembly ordered the Board to enlarge the Committee of Church Extension, appoint a Secretary for this specific department, bring this important cause more prominently before the churches, and present a separate report of the receipts and disbursements of this fund. In 1855 the Assembly relieved the Board of Missions of this business, and committed it to certain persons, who were required to organize as the Committee of Church Extension, directly subject to the Assembly, and to be located at St. Louis.* Its principles, as declared in its first report, were—appropriations shall be made on recommendation of Presbyteries; the amount shall be

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 422–424.

determined by the necessities of the congregation and the state of the treasury; appropriations shall be granted as widely and equally as possible; a certificate shall be required from the Trustees that the property is secured to the O. S. Presbyterian Church, and that the appropriation will complete the house free of debt; uncalled-for appropriations shall be null after two years; donors shall have the right to designate the church to be aided; and appropriations shall be made payable as soon after a fixed time as the church comply with the conditions.*

What was "the Board of Church Extension"?

In 1860 the Assembly changed the name of the committee above described to the "Board of Church Extension," without making any change in its internal organization or in its relations to the Assembly.† This Board continued its operations until the reunion. But it had no charter or permanent funds, and was therefore free from legal obstacles to a union with the N. S. Trustees of the Church Erection Fund.‡

What was "the Church Erection Committee"?

In 1850 the N. S. Assembly resolved, "That it be recommended to our churches to strive earnestly to render our religious institutions permanent by the erection of church edifices and the settlement of Pastors wherever this can be done; and in this work the older and wealthier churches ought to co-operate with the younger and feebler." In 1853 it was determined to raise a permanent fund of $100,000 to aid feeble congregations in erecting houses of worship. A Church Erection Committee of ten persons was to be annually elected by the Assembly, six of whom should live in New York and

* *Minutes G. A., 1856*, p. 555. † *Ibid., 1860*, pp. 33, 40.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 442.

four in Philadelphia. The meetings were to be held alternately in these cities. The fund was confided to the Treasurer of the Assembly, subject to the order of the committee, but no appropriation could be granted until the whole sum of $100,000 be raised. Reports were to be made to the Assembly of the relative needs of each Synod, of the condition of the fund, and proposing a proportionment of the same. The Assembly were to determine the amount to which each Synod would be entitled for the next year. This amount might be drawn by the Synod for loans or donations to the churches. Each loan must be definitely agreed upon, and security in bond and mortgage or personal notes obtained satisfactory to the committee. Donations might be made, and loans remitted in cases of need, to one-fourth the amount apportioned to the Synod. But all moneys must be secured on the house, in case of a change in the ecclesiastical relations of the church. Each church receiving aid must take an annual collection for the Church Erection Committee. No interest was demanded on loans until the principal became due.*

What was "The Trustees of the Church Erection Fund of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America"?

In 1854 the N. S. Assembly resolved to form a Board of Trustees, so named, to consist of nine persons, of whom four shall be Ministers, and five Elders of churches under the care of this Assembly; these Elders shall be residents in New York. The Board shall be located in that city, and make annual reports to the Assembly. A charter was obtained to enable the Trustees to hold and administer the fund. The

* *New Digest*, pp. 375–378.

duties assigned to the Church Erection Committee were transferred to this Board of Trustees, which was to perform them through Committees on Church Erection in the several Synods. Each application for aid shall be written and full, and made first to these synodical committees. If approved, it shall be endorsed by the committee and sent to the Board of Trustees, which, on receiving the necessary papers, legally approved, may grant the amount thus secured. No loan or donation shall be made except to an organized church and on a building otherwise free from incumbrance, and in payment of debts contracted within a year. The loan could not exceed one-third the value of property, nor more than $500. A donation shall not be more than $200, nor exceed one-fourth the value of property. All loans shall be made on the following conditions: (1) The principal shall be returned in four equal annual installments, the first to be due in three years from date of loan; (2) if the installments are punctually paid, no interest will be required; (3) in default of any payment interest shall be required on the whole unpaid loan; (4) if the church withdraw from the General Assembly, the whole amount unpaid shall at once become due. Security shall be given by mortgage of the property, which shall be kept insured. In 1855, the Board being fully organized and incorporated, the Church Erection Fund was transferred to it by the Treasurer of the Assembly. The whole amount, $100,000, was completed in 1856, and appropriations were then made.* In 1866 the above plan was so changed that the system of loans to churches was abandoned, and the fund was invested, and the interest thereon, with the collections from the churches, was used in

* *New Digest*, pp. 378–393.

making absolute donations to feeble congregations, secured by mortgage and insurance as before. These donations shall not exceed one-third the amount contributed, and secured by mortgage on the house and lot. The Permanent Fund retained that name, and moneys received from collections and other sources were called "the Supplementary Fund." Applications for aid shall be first made to the Church Erection Committee of Presbytery, instead of to that of the Synod, as formerly.*

What is "the Board of the Church Erection Fund of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America"?

At the reunion the (O. S.) "Board of Church Extension" and the (N. S.) "Trustees of the Church Erection Fund" were united, retaining the name and charter of the Trustees of the "Church Erection Fund." The Board (consisting of twenty-one persons) was chosen impartially from both branches of the Church. Of the Trustees, seven Ministers and eight laymen resided in or near New York, and three Ministers and three laymen in the West. The Board was located in New York. The charter was amended, so that the name was changed to "the Board of the Church Erection Fund of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America."† Appendix, p. 541.

What changes have been made in the work of the Board?

In 1879 the Assembly received an overture from the Board asking "that, in view of the importance of establishing schools and building chapels in Utah, New Mexico and Alaska, the plan governing the Board may

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 443–448.
† *Minutes G. A. 1870*, p. 117.

be amended so that the Supplementary Fund may be made available for the building of chapels as well as of churches, and also for authority to effect such a change in the character of the said Board as shall enable them to engage in the work of chapel-building." A similar request came from the Presbytery of Colorado. The Board obtained leave to effect the changes necessary.* The next year the Board reported that application had been made for the change in the charter, but it had not yet been granted, and when made it would authorize them to build chapels only in Utah, New Mexico and Alaska.†

In 1880 the Assembly approved "the action of the Board in declining, in ordinary cases, to aid any church to the amount of more than $1000 to build expensive houses of worship."‡

In the same year an overture was received desiring a change, so that the Board could grant aid to churches owned by Presbyteries. The Assembly replied that "we do not deem it expedient that the charter of the Board be amended for the purpose of meeting special cases;" "that an easy way out of the difficulty may be found; . . . that the Presbytery deed the property to the new churches it desires to erect, in their corporate names. The Trustees of these churches will then be able to receive the aid needed from the Board, and can return to the Board the mortgage required. The Trustees of the churches can then give a second mortgage to the Trustees of the Presbytery, thus securing them in their rights."§

(In regard to manses, see p. 472.)

* *Minutes G. A. 1879*, p. 587.
† *Ibid., 1880*, p. 156.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 50.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Board of Relief.

What were the early efforts of our Church to relieve disabled Ministers and widows?

Rev. John Wilson, one of the original members of the General Presbytery, died in 1712, and in 1719 the Synod of Philadelphia resolved that an appropriation of four pounds be made to his widow from the fund for pious uses. She received another appropriation in 1725. In 1733, Rev. J. Andrew, an aged Minister, applied to the Synod for an assistant in his ministry in Philadelphia. This was granted, on condition that the church make provision for his honorable maintenance for life.*

What was the Widows' Fund?

In 1755 the following plan was approved by the Synod of Philadelphia, and signed by all the Ministers present: Each Minister shall pay annually into a common stock two or three pounds; future members of the Synod and Candidates may enter into the same agreement. Out of the fund thus raised shall be annually paid five pounds, or seven pounds ten shillings, to the widow of every deceased member, according as the Minister paid two or three pounds annually. If, however, the widow should remarry, she shall receive but one-third of the annuity, and the other two-thirds shall pass to the child or children of the deceased Minister for twelve years after the father's death, and be divided among such children as the company shall judge best. If there be no children, and the widow marry, she shall receive only one-half the amount through the rest of her life. If any member become disabled, he shall be entitled to like annuities during his disability. The fund was further to be increased by annual collections in the churches. Thirty-

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 58, 80, 105.

seven pounds were subscribed on the first day. This was called "the Widows' Fund." Five annual payments must be made by the Minister before the annuity could be available. If a Minister should die before these are made, one-half of the annuity shall be paid to the widow until the amount be completed. A charter was obtained in 1759 with the corporate name of "The Corporation for Relief of Poor and Distressed Presbyterian Ministers, and of the Poor and Distressed Widows and Children of Presbyterian Ministers." Its capital stock could not exceed one thousand pounds for each twenty Ministers.* The corporation still continues, and is the oldest life insurance company in the United States. The company construes the term "Presbyterian Ministers" as including Presbyterians, Reformed Presbyterians, United Presbyterians, Cumberland Presbyterians, the Reformed Dutch and German Reformed denominations and any other of like polity. It was understood to include also the laymen of these denominations. This has been secured by amendments. Its present name is "The Presbyterian Annuity and Life Insurance Company," and it is located in Philadelphia. "In its entire history it seems to have some intimate relation to the Synod by whose agency or advice it was brought into existence, and also to subsequent General Assemblies, and that the interest or relation was preserved for a number of years, and so long as the sessions of the Assembly continued to be held in Philadelphia." In 1876 it petitioned the Assembly to be recognized, and that annual reports might be presented. But the Assembly declined to undertake such supervision and endorsement, as foreign to the powers belonging to the Assembly.†

* *Records Pres. Church*, pp. 215–217, 222, 296, 309. † *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 472–477; *Minutes G. A. 1876*, pp. 72, 73; *1881*, pp. 524, 550.

Wnat other plan was proposed for the relief of disabled Ministers?

In 1794 the following plan was sent down to the Presbyteries: (1) Each Minister receiving a salary of eighty pounds shall contribute annually thirty shillings to a common stock. (2) The fund shall be applied to the relief of Presbyterian Ministers and their families. (3) Each Presbytery shall annually report a list of its invalid Ministers and needy families of Ministers, with recommendations for aid. (4) Yearly collections shall be made. (5) All Ministers in connection with the Assembly may be aided. The Presbyteries, however, while approving the object, regarded "the plan as inexpedient and improper to be adopted."*

What was the "Fund for Disabled Ministers and their Families"?

In 1849 the O. S. Assembly determined to constitute a fund for the support of the families of deceased Ministers and for the relief of aged and disabled Ministers, by annual contributions from the churches; that the fund be placed under the care of the Board of Trustees of the Assembly, to be disbursed by the Board of Publication upon recommendation of the Presbyteries; and that a permanent fund be founded by special contributions and legacies. In 1852 the duty of disbursing this fund was transferred to the Board of Trustees of the General Assembly. The plan adopted in 1849 was endorsed by several Assemblies, especially in 1856, when a report was read from a committee appointed the previous year to consider if any changes were advisable.* In 1861 means were offered from private sources to sustain the Chairman and Secretary of the committee on the fund,

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 478.

that he might give the whole of his time to the cause. This proved a great blessing—so much so that notwithstanding forty-six Presbyteries withdrew their support in consequence of the civil war, the contributions to the fund increased. The Assembly directed the attention of the Church to the advisability of adding constantly to the Permanent Fund. At the time of the reunion the Permanent Fund amounted to $24,000, and the contributions from the churches to $32,772.*

What plan was "the Ministerial Relief Fund"?

In 1861 the N. S. Assembly appointed a committee on the subject of raising a fund to aid disabled Ministers and their families. In 1864 it was resolved that a fund be raised by annual collections, donations and legacies, to be called "the Ministerial Relief Fund," "for the relief of disabled Ministers of good and regular standing in connection with this body, and the families of Ministers who have deceased while in our connection." This fund was confided to the Trustees of the Presbyterian House, to be disbursed on recommendations of the Presbyteries, according to such rules as they may deem equal and beneficial. The Trustees were empowered to appoint a Secretary and prescribe his duties. Every Presbytery was directed to appoint a Standing Committee to inquire into cases of need, and report them with recommendation to the Executive Committee of the Relief Fund.†

What was "the Relief Fund for Disabled Ministers and the Widows and Orphans of Deceased Ministers"?

The joint committee appointed to consider the affairs of the O. S. "Fund for Disabled Ministers and

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 448; *Minutes G. A. 1863*, p. 102; *1869*, p. 986

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 449.

their Families," and of the N. S. "Ministerial Relief Fund," reported the following, which was adopted: The fund shall be called "The Relief Fund for Disabled Ministers and the Widows and Orphans of Deceased Ministers." The Trustees of the Assembly shall annually elect a Secretary, a Treasurer, and four of their members to be a committee to take charge of this fund. All appropriations shall be made on the recommendation of the Presbytery, and made from year to year. The applications must give full information. The responsibility of the recommendations belongs to the Presbyteries, yet the committee has the right to appropriate according to the merits of each case and the state of the treasury.*

What is the "Presbyterian Board of Relief for Disabled Ministers and the Widows and Orphans of Deceased Ministers"?

In 1874 the Assembly appointed a committee of seven to inquire into the expediency of raising the Committee on Ministerial Relief to the position of a Board, and to report how its efficiency may be increased. A report was presented the next year, but referred to the Assembly of 1876, when the proposed change was ordered, and thus the agency was brought into direct contact with the Assembly and liability to loss avoided. The Board met and organized in Philadelphia June 20, 1876, and obtained a charter the same year. The Board consists of twelve persons besides the Secretary and the Treasurer.†

In 1880 the Assembly declared "that no appropriation can be made to Ministers, in ordinary cases, simply because they are poor, unless they are disabled by disease or the infirmities of age, so as to be unable to sustain

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 450.

† *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 89; *1876*, p. 63; *1877*, pp. 557, 670.

themselves by some suitable employment;" "that in ordinary cases no appropriation should be made to a widow of a Minister who has children able to give her a support;" "that in the case of a Minister who voluntarily and in health leaves the work of the ministry for some secular employment, and follows that for a series of years, and then by failure in business has come to want, such a course should ordinarily be regarded as a voluntary relinquishment of all claims upon the fund of the Board."* In 1881 the Assembly directed "that whenever the Board see proper to decline an application for aid the reasons for such action shall be transmitted to the Presbytery presenting the petition."† Appendix, p. 542.

Presbyterian Committee of Missions for Freedmen.

What early action did the Presbyterian Church take in regard to the colored race?

In 1774 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia received a request to send two natives of Africa as Missionaries to that land; this was granted. The discussion introduced the subject of negro slavery, but no action was taken until 1787. The Synod then declared that our people should "use the most prudent measures, consistent with the interest and the state of civil society in the counties where they live, to procure eventually the final abolition of slavery in America;" and that to this end those persons now held in servitude should receive a good education to prepare them for freedom, and that opportunity and sufficient means be granted them of procuring their own liberty.‡ In 1800 the Assembly, in system-

* *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 21. † *Ibid., 1881*, p. 521.
‡ *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 456, 458, 540.

atizing its missionary work, specified four objects demanding attention; one of which was "the instruction of the negroes, the poor and those who are destitute of the means of grace in various parts of this extensive country."* The temporal and spiritual condition of the slaves was constantly considered by the Assembly, and the decision of the Synod in 1787 was frequently reiterated and amplified, as in 1815, when the Assembly declared that it considered "the buying and selling of slaves by way of traffic, and all undue severity in the management of them, as inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel," and Presbyteries and Sessions were enjoined "to make use of all prudent measures to prevent such shameful and unrighteous conduct." And in 1818 the Assembly unanimously resolved, "That we consider the voluntary enslaving of one portion of the human race by another as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature, as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, . . . and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ." "We rejoice that the Church to which we belong commenced as early as any other in this country the good work of endeavoring to put an end to slavery." To accomplish this, the Assembly recommended all our people to patronize and encourage the American Colonization Society, which had been organized in 1816, and that all the members of our Church "facilitate the instruction of the slaves in the principles and duties of the Christian religion."† One object specified in the subscription-paper for the Assembly's permanent missionary fund (1800) was "the instruction of the black people;" and in 1801, John Chavis, a black man of

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 312. † *Ibid.*, pp. 817-822.

prudence and piety, a Licentiate of the Presbytery of Lexington, was commissioned by the Assembly as a Missionary among people of his own color. In 1807 John Gloucester, a black man, was licensed and commissioned to the same work. Ten years later he appears in the Assembly as a member from the Presbytery of Philadelphia.*

What action did the O. S. Assembly take?

The question whether the holding of slaves is, under all circumstances, a heinous sin, agitated all branches of the Christian Church. In 1845 the O. S. Assembly said that "since Christ and his inspired Apostles did not make the holding of slaves a bar to communion, we as a court of Christ have no authority to do so; since they did not attempt to remove it from the Church by legislation, we have no authority to legislate on the subject." As the "Apostles sought to ameliorate the condition of the slaves . . . . by teaching both masters and slaves the glorious doctrines of the gospel, and enjoining upon each the discharge of their relative duties, thus only can the Church of Christ, as such, now improve the condition of the slaves in our country." The next year the Assembly said: "Our Church has, from time to time, during a period of nearly sixty years, expressed its views on the subject of slavery. During all this period it has held and uttered substantially the same sentiments;" and "that in the judgment of this house the action of the General Assembly of 1845 was not intended to deny or rescind the testimony often uttered by the General Assembly previous to that date." The subject was introduced in 1849 and in 1850 by overtures, but the question was regarded as settled.† In 1863 the actions of

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 826. † *Ibid.*, pp. 823–825.

1818 and 1845 were again declared as a satisfactory and full expression of the opinion of the Church.* After the Emancipation Proclamation the Assembly (in 1864) gave an important deliverance, in which the unequivocal and consistent testimonies of the Church on this subject were reiterated, and the abiding principles thus expressed recognized. The Assembly expressed its gratitude that God had overruled the wickedness of the rebellion to deliver our country from the evil and guilt of slavery, and its desire that this root of bitterness might be entirely extirpated.†

In 1825 and 1839 the Assembly expressed pleasure at the growing attention of the Church to the religious instruction of slaves, and declared that the success of such teaching marked an era in the work of domestic missions. In 1847 the interest manifested in the religious instruction of the colored population was recognized as greatly increasing. The work was continued year after year with growing zeal and success. The Boards of Domestic Missions and Education were heartily engaged.‡

What was "the Ashmun Institute"?

In 1853 the Assembly, in answer to a memorial from the Presbytery of New Castle, resolved, "That the establishment of a high school for the use and benefit of the free colored population of this country meets the cordial approbation and recommendation of this Assembly, with the understanding that it shall be wholly under the supervision and control of the Presbytery or Synod within whose bounds it may be located, thus securing such an education as shall promote the usefulness and happiness of this class of our people."§ It was located

* *Minutes G. A. (O. S.) 1863*, p. 55.
† *Ibid., 1864*, pp. 296–299.
‡ *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 827, 828.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 829. See p. 314.

near Oxford, Pa., and called "the Ashmun Institute," in commemoration of Jehudi Ashmun, an agent of the American Colonization Society who took charge in 1822 of a reinforcement for the colony of Liberia. He found the colony disorganized and imperiled. He saved its existence, and left it in 1828 prosperous. He died soon after his return.* The Assembly frequently recommended to the churches this institute, as "the only seminary in the country which has for its object the education of colored men for the gospel ministry." In 1859 it sent out three Missionaries to Africa as the first-fruits of this seminary.†

What is Lincoln University?

By the Legislature of Pennsylvania the charter of the Ashmun Institute was in 1866 enlarged, and its name changed to "the Lincoln University," continuing under the care of the Presbytery of New Castle.‡

What is "the Biddle Memorial Institute"?

The Presbytery of Catawba appointed Rev. S. C. Alexander to establish a theological class at Charlotte, N. C., for the training of freedmen as Catechists and Ministers. A lady in Philadelphia furnished the means for the buildings, and the institute, in honor of her husband, who died in the civil war, was called "the Biddle Memorial Institute."§

What was "the Wallingford Academy"?

This was established in 1868; the site for buildings in Charleston, S. C., was given by Mrs. E. G. Wallingford of Pittsburg. Its object was to prepare colored teachers.

* *American Cyclopædia.*

† *Minutes G. A. (O. S.) 1859*, p. 524; *1863*, p. 50.

‡ *Ibid., 1866*, p. 76. See p. 314.

§ *Ibid., 1867*, p. 447. See p. 315.

At the end of the first year this academy had over three hundred pupils.*

What were "the General Assembly's Committees for the Education of Freedmen"?

In examining the report of the Board of Education to the O. S. Assembly in 1864, attention was called to "the large number of the African race, known as 'freedmen,'" being in great moral and intellectual destitution. The whole subject was referred to a committee, who reported the following plan for the religious instruction of the freedmen; which was adopted. The work was evidently of such magnitude that it could not be conducted by the Board of Education. "The Presbyterian Church must be true to its historic doctrine and faith; that the hope of the African race, under God, is in Christian education;" and that God is by his providence calling upon our Church to do what it can for the elevation and salvation of this downtrodden and long-abused people. It was resolved that two committees be appointed, of two Ministers and three laymen each, one in Philadelphia and one in Indianapolis, to be called "the General Assembly's Committees for the Education of Freedmen." These shall co-operate, having oversight of the work, appointing Teachers and Ministers, upon the endorsement of Presbyteries, but not interfering with the Board of Domestic Missions, establishing schools, determining the books, etc. to be used, and obtaining funds for the work. These committees were to report directly to the Assembly. And the Board of Publication was directed to furnish, gratis, at its discretion, such of its publications as may be used for the evangelization of the freedmen.†

* *Minutes G. A. (O. S.) 1869*, p. 990.

† *Ibid., 1864*, pp. 274, 321-323.

What was "the General Assembly's Committee on Freedmen"?

To increase the efficiency of this new temporary agency, the O. S. Assembly determined in 1865 to substitute one committee for the two appointed the previous year. It was located at Pittsburg, and consisted of nine Ministers and nine laymen. It received similar powers to those granted to the two committees, and was ordered to transfer, as soon as possible, to the Boards of the Church, such parts of their work as may belong to the specific objects of these several Boards. The next year, because of the magnitude and importance of the work, six members were added to the committee, which was empowered to conduct its business by an Executive Committee. At the time of the reunion this committee had organized 72 churches, had under its care 5634 communicants, had gathered 4723 children in Sabbath-schools and over 3000 in day-schools. It had three institutes in the Southern States preparing Teachers and Ministers, and held property worth $66,680.*

What action did the N. S. Assembly take?

The N. S. Assembly in 1839 referred the subject of slavery to the lower judicatories, to take such action as they might deem most judicious and adapted to remove the evil. No other action was taken until 1846, when the Assembly said that "while we feel bound to bear our testimony against slavery, and to exhort our beloved brethren to remove it from them as speedily as possible by all appropriate and available means, . . . yet as a court of our Lord Jesus Christ we possess no legislative authority, and as the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church

* *Minutes G. A. (O. S.) 1865*, p. 543; *1866*, p. 77; *1869*, p. 939.

we possess no judicial power." "We must therefore leave this matter with the Sessions and Presbyteries and Synods, . . . to act in the administration of discipline as they may judge it to be their duty, constitutionally subject to the General Assembly only in the way of general review and control." In 1849 nineteen documents on the subject of slavery were presented, and the Assembly reiterated the actions of 1818 and 1846, as including the following principles: (1) Civil liberty is man's right. (2) Slavery "is intrinsically an unrighteous and oppressive system," and injurious to all concerned in it. (3) It is the duty of all Christians "as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery." (4) Where it cannot be removed at once, direct religious instruction and practical knowledge of life should be given to prepare the slave for emancipation. (5) Traffic in slaves, undue severity and breaking up families should be corrected by church discipline. In 1850 the holding of slaves, except where it is unavoidable by State laws, was declared to be an offence subject to discipline. In 1853 the Assembly required the Presbyteries to report the next year (1) the number of slaveholders in connection with the churches, and the number of their slaves; (2) how far these slaves are held by unavoidable necessity; (3) are the Southern churches showing a practical regard to the religious well-being of the slaves? In 1855 a pastoral letter to all the churches was sent, reaffirming the former deliverances, and a committee was appointed to report to the next Assembly on the constitutional authority of the Assembly over the subject of slaveholding in our churches. This committee reported in 1856 that the Assembly "has no power to commence a process of dis-

cipline with an individual offender," and that "in the way of general review and control it can reach directly only the judicatory next below; that is, the Synod." Besides, the Assembly has "the testifying and reproving function so often exercised in time past." The next year the Assembly rehearsed its former deliverances, and expressed grief at the discovery that a portion of the Church at the South had put forth a new doctrine, that slavery was an ordinance of God, and as existing in this country was both right and scriptural. This was declared to be at war with the whole spirit of the gospel and abhorrent to the conscience of the Christian world. The Presbytery of Lexington, South, was called upon to review and rectify their position, as "such doctrines and practice cannot be permanently tolerated in the Presbyterian Church." Against this action a solemn protest was offered and placed on the minutes. The signers declared the action of the Assembly to be a virtual exscinding of the South, the exercise of usurped power, destructive of the unity of the Church, hurtful to North and South, and imperiling the union of these United States. The answer to this protest is recorded. When the Assembly met the next year, six Southern Synods were not represented, they having organized in the mean while "the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church." *

What was "the Freedmen's Department of the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions"?

This department was organized in 1865, and the work committed to it and its mode of operation were very similar to those confided by the O. S. Assembly to its Committees on Freedmen.† At the time of reunion it had

* *New Digest*, pp. 275–295, 564–568. See p. 270.

† See p. 456.

13 Missionaries and 185 teachers, 93 schools and about 4000 pupils.*

What is "the Presbyterian Committee of Missions for Freedmen"?

At the reunion the Assembly's Committee on Freedmen and the Freedmen's Department of the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions continued their work until the reorganization was completed. It was determined that the whole work of our Church for the religious and educational interest of the colored race in this country be conducted by a committee of twelve persons, located in Pittsburg, to be known as the "Presbyterian Committee of Missions for Freedmen." To it were transferred all documents, moneys and properties previously held by the Committee on Freedmen and the Freedmen's Department. The Boards of the Church were recommended to co-operate with it in conducting its work. The committee was recommended to look for a supply of competent colored Ministers and Teachers for the institutions established by our Church, and the necessity of providing schools in which females may enjoy similar advantages was urged upon the attention of the committee.† In 1874 the Assembly ordered that this committee "shall continue as at present located and constituted for the period of five years, during which period its affairs shall be conducted with a view to the final merging of the committee with the Board of Home Missions, and as soon as possible the churches under the care of the committee shall be transferred to the Board."‡ In 1878 it was found that some interpreted this act as ordering the transfer to the Board of Home

* *Minutes G. A. 1870*, p. 104. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 451.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 44.

Missions of the work of the committee, which should then be dissolved; and others understood it as requiring only the transfer of mission churches to the Board, while the committee should continue to supervise the educational work in all its details. In January the committee had transferred to the Board 80 churches, 27 Ministers and 2 Catechists, and retained under their care 56 churches, 22 Ministers and 25 Catechists, and the entire work of evangelical education. The Assembly considered the two views above mentioned, the condition of the work, and overtures from one Synod and two Presbyteries in the Southern States pleading for the continuance of the committee, and determined "that the work as at present carried on by the Presbyterian Committee of Missions for Freedmen be continued," and that it be earnestly commended to the prayers and liberality of the churches.* The next year the question was again considered, and the Assembly refused by a large vote to transfer the work to the Board of Home Missions and discontinue the committee, declaring that the reasons which actuated the Assembly in 1878 were still cogent, and the work too important to be jeopardized by an experiment.† Appendix, p. 543.

What schools are under the care of this committee?

I. *Chartered Institutions:*

Biddle University, Charlotte, N. C.‡

Wallingford Academy, Charleston, S. C.‡

Scotia Seminary, Concord, N. C. Its design is "to educate colored girls in religion and in the arts and sciences usually taught in seminaries of a high order, and in those domestic duties which belong to the highest

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, pp. 74–81. † *Ibid., 1879*, pp. 592, 597.

‡ See p. 455.

type of wife, mother and teacher." Its location was chosen by the Freedmen's Committee. Its funds were contributed chiefly by Mr. Matthew Scott of Ohio. It has accommodations for thirty-two boarders, and receives a large number of day-scholars.*

II. *Normal Schools.* From the first the committee have paid special attention to the training of the freedmen to be teachers to their own race. The pupils in the schools, when prepared, were employed during their vacations in teaching in Sabbath- and day-schools. This idea has gradually received more attention. Certain schools were designated as training-schools. These were afterward called "normal schools."†

Brainerd Institute, Chester, S. C., organized in 1869.

Fairfield Normal School, Winnsboro', S. C., for boys and girls, organized in 1869.

Bluffton Institute, S. C., organized in 1878.‡

III. *Graded Schools:*

Medway Graded School, in Liberty co., Ga., organized in 1874.

Greensboro' Graded School, Greensboro', N. C., organized in 1868 as a parochial school, but in 1874 made a graded school, having two departments, white and colored.

Columbia Graded School, Columbia, Tenn., organized in 1866, and at first called the Columbia Graded School.§

IV. *Common Parochial Schools.* These are schools under the supervision of the Sessions of particular churches, aided by the committee. They teach the ordinary branches, preparing pupils for the graded schools.

* *Minutes G. A. 1872*, p. 159. † *Ibid., 1874*, p. 154; *1880*, p. 165.
‡ *Ibid., 1878*, p. 201. § *Ibid., 1878*, p. 204.

In 1878 there were 37, and in 1881, 94 parochial schools, under the care of the committee.*

While these schools are intended primarily for the freedmen, they are open to the white as well as colored people. "The whole system of church and school, as considered by the committee, knows no exclusion of persons on account of color."†

In 1881 the Assembly endorsed "the efforts to secure the erection of a building at Franklinton, N. C., for the use of the State Normal School, provided the means for that purpose can be expended under the direction of the committee, and the title to the property secured be invested in the Trustees of the Assembly."‡

Sustentation Fund.

What was the origin of this scheme?

In 1870 the Assembly received several overtures on the subject, and certain documents concerning the Scottish Sustentation Fund. These were referred to a committee, which reported the next year—a very valuable paper, setting forth the necessity of some scheme to assist Pastors whose salaries are insufficient. Three plans were described: (1) That of the Free Kirk of Scotland—"a common fund, share and share alike, with supplements *ad libitum* in the wealthier charges;" (2) that of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the endowment scheme—a permanent sustentation fund, the annual income of which should be sufficient for the purpose; (3) that of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland—supplementary aid. This last was recommended and adopted.§

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 73; *1880*, pp. 165–167; *1881*, p. 524.
† *Ibid., 1876*, p. 41. ‡ *Ibid., 1881*, p. 526.
§ *Ibid., 1870*, p. 28; *1871*, pp. 556–564.

What is the scheme of sustentation?

1. All charges shall be divided into two classes: Full pastoral charges, the Pastors receiving a salary of at least $500, and church extension (mission) charges, having Stated Supplies or Pastors receiving less than $500. The former only shall come under the scheme for aid; the latter shall apply to the Board of Home Missions.

2. The aim shall be to make the minimum of salary in the full pastoral charges $1000.

3. Only those churches shall be aided who are paying the Pastor an average of $7.30 per annum for each member.

4. Each Presbytery is required to investigate the case of all churches of 200 members who may be paying less than $1000 salary.

5. Each church applying for aid shall appoint a committee, who shall carry out a plan of weekly or monthly contributions to this and to all the Boards of the Church.

6. All churches shall adopt some plan of systematic contributions reaching every person.

7. Each Pastor shall aid to secure from his people an amount equal to at least one-twentieth of his salary annually, to aid this scheme.

8. Each church shall report to the Assembly the salary paid its Pastor.

9. The Presbyteries shall examine carefully every application for aid under this scheme.

10. A Central Committee of seven, with a Secretary, shall be yearly appointed by the Assembly to superintend the operations and further the great object.*

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 452–455.

What was "the General Assembly's Committee on Ministerial Sustentation"?

This was the name given to the Central Committee of seven described above. Rev. M. W. Jacobus, D.D., was its Secretary. It was organized at Pittsburg, September 13, 1871. The aid granted by the committee to churches was understood to be for a limited time—for one, two or three years. The conditions of aid were—(1) actual installation of Pastor; (2) salary at least $500; (3) average of at least $7.30 per member, exclusive of manse; (4) endorsement of Presbytery; (5) no reduction of salary from preceding year; (6) church's salary to be first paid in full, and reported quarterly; (7) advance payment to the committee of one-twentieth of church salary; (8) systematic giving (by envelope or collectors) to all the Boards; (9) no aid to adjacent churches without consolidation. The Pastor could bear no help in these conditions. For the second year a new application as above is required, and satisfactory evidence must be given of advance toward self-sustentation.*

What is "the Sustentation Department of the Board of Home Missions"?

In 1874 a plan was adopted for the consolidation of the Boards. The Board of Home Missions shall have two departments, that of Home Missions and that of Sustentation. The claims of these shall be presented to the churches for separate collections. The churches aided by the Board shall come under the scheme of sustentation as soon as the Board and the Presbytery shall judge they are able. No church shall continue under the Home Mission department for more than five years, unless for special reasons satisfactory to the

* *Minutes G. A. 1872*, p. 160; *1873*, p. 632.

Presbytery.* In 1875 the Assembly ordered that the churches aided by this department be divided into two classes: (1) Mission pastorates, in which one or more churches constitute a pastoral relation, and contribute for the support of the Pastor a sum equal to at least an average of $7.30 per member; the minimum salary is determined by the Board and the Presbytery; and (2) Sustentation pastorates, consisting of one or more churches with a house of worship, with a Pastor installed, the contributions for his support amounting, exclusive of manse, to a sum equal to an average of at least $7.30 per member, and not less than $700. They shall increase at the rate of $50 annually toward self-support, unless Presbytery deem it impossible. The Board will increase the salary to $1000. Applications must be endorsed by Presbytery, and assurance given that collections are taken for all the Boards. Few churches, however, were able to fulfill the conditions. Many who had received aid were unable to pledge an advance of $50 on a new application, and therefore left the department in despair, though the treasury had a large unappropriated balance. Several overtures were presented to the Assembly proposing modifications, and many asking that sustentation be re-established as a separate scheme in the benevolent work of the Church.† In 1878 the following changes were adopted: (1) The separate departments of the Board of Home Missions be discontinued, and the two treasuries consolidated. (2) The churches receiving aid be divided into two classes—the sustentation pastorates and mission charges. (3) The conditions to the sustentation pastorates: a regular pastoral relation, annual collections for all the Boards, a

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 44. † *Ibid., 1876*, p. 60; *1877*, p. 640.

contribution of at least $600 in money toward the salary (such contribution averaging not less than $6.50 for each member) and a recommendation from Presbytery. The Board shall then supplement the salary so as to make it at least $900, which shall include the estimated rent of the house. This must not interfere with the grouping of feeble churches. The conditions to a mission charge: it may consist of one or more churches, the Minister and his charge must belong to the same Presbytery, annual collections taken for all the Boards, and recommendation from the Presbytery; the amount of aid to be determined by the Presbytery and Board. No church in either class shall receive aid for more than five years, except in special cases. The Board shall continue to commission Missionaries to new and destitute fields where no church has been organized. The fund, which in 1878 amounted to $44,879.50, was ordered to be used only for sustentation pastorates, and all the churches were recommended "to take separate collections for sustentation pastorates, and transmit the same to the Treasurer of the Board of Home Missions."* In 1880 the Assembly adopted the report of a committee, declaring that "this plan of sustentation has been of great service to the Church in many ways, and our people will not willingly let it come to naught." Presbyteries were urged "to take prompt and efficient measures to replenish this fund."†

What objects are to be accomplished by this scheme?

"It aimed primarily at a better support of the ministry in our feeble churches," and to advance these churches to be self-supporting.‡ In 1878 the ends de-

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, pp. 43, 72. † *Ibid., 1880*, p. 32.
‡ *Ibid., 1873*, p. 631.

signed to be accomplished were stated to be "the more general establishment of the pastoral office and the better support of the ministry.* In the report in 1880 the Board of Home Missions says: "The original idea of the sustentation scheme was to afford a larger salary under sustentation than under Home Missions to such churches only as showed good promise of early reaching self-support. The Church never proposed to have two schemes that would discriminate between men of the same abilities and churches in the same condition, and aid one more than the other. The larger aid was granted on sustentation only in the expectation that such a church would reach self-support much sooner than an ordinary Home Mission church." †

What action was taken in 1881?

The following resolution was adopted: "In view of the small amount of information before the Assembly in reference to sustentation, and the known fact that but a small proportion of the churches contribute to the cause; therefore be it Resolved, That the Committee of Fifteen to consider and report upon the relations of the Presbyteries to the Board of Home Missions be instructed to inquire into, and report to the next Assembly, concerning the conditions and workings of sustentation as a benevolent agency of the Church, with a view to either increasing the efficiency of the same or dropping it altogether from the list." ‡ The consideration of the following resolution was postponed to the next General Assembly: "Having regard to the numbers of our Ministers, the large increase in the expense of living, their limited incomes, and the inadequacy thus far of all

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 43. † *Ibid., 1880*, p. 134.
‡ *Ibid., 1881*, p. 593.

our efforts to provide fully for the exigences to which they and their families may be reduced, be it Resolved, That this whole matter be committed to a special committee, to consider it in all its bearings, and report to the next General Assembly on the practicability of extending existing agencies or adopting a new method enabling Ministers, especially those who are entering on their work, to provide in a measure for their own households in the event of their removal or their being disabled."* Appendix, pp. 542, 545.

TEMPERANCE.

What action has the Assembly taken on Temperance?

In 1811 a committee was appointed to devise measures to prevent some of the mischief which was experienced from the use of spirituous liquors. Their report was adopted, requiring Ministers to preach often on the sin of intemperance, and to warn against the habits which tend to produce it. The Sessions were enjoined to exercise special vigilance over communicants in regard to this sin, and to endeavor by private warnings and public censure "to purge the Church of a sin so enormous in its mischiefs and so disgraceful to the Christian name;" and the officers and members were urged to labor to reduce the number of taverns and other places for the sale of liquor. In 1818 a pastoral letter was issued on the subject. In 1827 it was Resolved, "That the Presbyterian Church in the United States will, with all readiness of mind, co-operate with their Christian brethren of every denomination, together with every friend of our country and of humanity, in one great national effort to accomplish a universal change in the habits and customs of our country relative to the intem-

* *Minutes G. A. 1831*, p. 592.

perate use of intoxicating liquors." This was in relation to the formation of the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance. A day of fasting and prayer was appointed in 1828. In 1829 and 1830 the Assembly rejoiced in the increased numbers and success of temperance societies, and urged their formation in each congregation, on the principle of entire abstinence from the use of ardent spirits. The N. S. Assembly in 1840, 1864 and 1866 reiterated the approbation of temperance societies, protested against forms and fashions which countenanced intemperance, urged all to refrain from cider, beer and ale as a beverage, and the manufacture and use of domestic wines, and declared "that total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks as a beverage is demanded from every Christian by the condition of society, the purity of the Church and the word of God." In 1865 the O. S. Assembly uttered a similar deliverance, and adopted a paper expressing the views of the Assembly on intemperance, the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits and the liability to church discipline of those who make or sell intoxicating drinks. The Assembly did not "sanction the adoption of any new terms of communion," but asserted that "the practice of manufacturing and retailing intoxicating drinks as a beverage is a sin against the brethren and against Christ, and while persevered in vitiates this evidence (of Christian character) and works a forfeiture of the privileges of the Christian communion." The reunited Church in 1871 reiterated the testimonies of former Assemblies, which the Board of Publication were ordered to print in abstract and send to all our Ministers.* Every year the Assembly has passed like resolutions on this subject.

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 483–493.

What is "the Permanent Committee on Temperance"?

In 1880, in answer to an overture, a special committee of nine was appointed to whom was referred the question of a Permanent Committee of the Assembly on Temperance, to report the next year. They recommended that the "Assembly appoint a Permanent Committee on Temperance, which shall consist of fifteen members—eight Ministers and seven laymen—a majority of whom shall reside in and near ———, who shall hold their first meeting in that city on the second Tuesday of June next, and then and there divide by lot into three separate sections of five each, to hold office for one, two and three years; their successors to be appointed each year for a term of three years by the General Assembly; the said committee to adopt their own by-laws, subject to the approval of the Assembly."

"The duty of this Permanent Committee shall be to seek to quicken and to unite our Synods and churches in suitable measures for promoting the temperance reform; to mature and report action on the subject to the General Assembly; to gather and report such statistics as may be of value and interest to the Church; to call attention to the deliverances of the Assembly on temperance, and recommend to the Board of Publication the issue of suitable works on the subject; to codify the previous acts of the Assembly on temperance for publication by the Board; and to initiate measures for promoting similar action by other branches of the evangelical Church. The expense of such publications shall be borne by the Board. Other expenses of this committee, to the amount of $250 annually, if not otherwise provided for, shall be paid from the treasury of the General Assembly." This recommendation was adopted,

and the blank was filled with the city of New York.* This is a new departure. All the other Boards or Permanent Committees are for the general work of the Church, the Assembly having refrained from appointing them in regard to special sins or virtues. This same Assembly (1881) refused to appoint a Permanent Committee on the Sabbath, though overtured to do so by a Presbytery and the International Sabbath-school Association, and referred to the action of the previous year, in which a similar petition from three Presbyteries was denied, on the ground that it is not expedient to multiply Permanent Committees, and the Assembly can itself better discharge the duty.† Appendix, p. 546.

Committee on Manses.

What were the early efforts of the Church to secure Manses?

In 1766 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia ordered "that in every congregation a committee be appointed, who shall twice in every year collect the Minister's stipend, and lay his receipts before the Presbytery preceding the Synod, and at the same time that the Ministers give an account of their diligence in visiting and catechising their people." "The Synod recommends that a glebe, with a convenient house and necessary improvements, be provided for every Minister." The subject of ministerial support was again before the Synod in 1782 and 1783, and before the General Assembly in 1799, and the churches were urged, for the interest of religion, for the honor of the Church and for the comfort and efficiency of their Pastors, to see that liberal

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, pp. 537, 592.
† *Ibid., 1880*, p. 76; *1881*, p. 548.

salaries be promptly paid, glebes and parsonages provided, and congregational and Pastor's libraries furnished in every church.*

What action was taken by the O. S. Assembly?

In 1843 the O. S. Assembly adopted the following paper: "For the purpose of facilitating the settlement and support of Pastors, and to guard more effectually against the temptation, or almost necessity, as in some cases seems to exist, for Ministers to involve themselves, to the injury of their usefulness, in procuring accommodations for themselves and families, Resolved, That it be earnestly recommended to our churches, wherever it is expedient and practicable, to provide suitable parsonages for the accommodation of their Pastors. Resolved, That great care be taken to have these parsonages so guarded by legal arrangements as most effectually to prevent controversy, and secure their perpetual enjoyment by the churches providing them for the continued support of the gospel through coming generations." Action was taken in 1854 in regard to ministerial support, and an important report on the subject was ordered to be published.† In 1864 the Assembly declared that, "Whereas the importance of providing parsonages for the comfortable accommodation of Presbyterian Ministers and their families is a duty, the performance of which cannot be much longer delayed, but the magnitude of the operation demands a careful scrutiny of the state of the Church and a thorough knowledge of her condition; therefore Resolved, That the churches under the care of the General Assembly be requested to reply to the following questions." These were seven in number, designed to ascertain how

* *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 359, 495, 499; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 95.

† *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 197-203.

many churches had parsonages, their condition, plan, and how obtained. The replies were to be sent to Mr. Joseph M. Wilson, who should classify them and report the next year. In 1865 the committee was continued, and the Presbyteries were enjoined to aid in obtaining the desired information. In 1866 the Presbyteries were required to continue the inquiries, and send a pastoral letter to their churches pressing upon them "the great importance and necessity of providing manses and libraries for their Ministers."*

What action was taken by the N. S. Assembly?

In 1854 the N. S. Assembly passed a resolution on the subject of ministerial support, urging the churches "to consider the question in the spirit of Christian fidelity and liberality, and to make ample provision for those who minister to them in word and doctrine."†

What was "the Committee on Manses"?

After the reunion in 1870 the Assembly appointed a committee of five laymen, of whom Mr. Joseph M. Wilson was Chairman, which was called the Committee on Manses. It was required to collect and arrange information from all the churches as to what they had done in regard to manses for their Pastors; and the churches were instructed to reply with due diligence to communications from this committee, and thereby aid in carrying out the behests of the Assembly. The next year it was enlarged to ten members. Presbyteries were requested to appoint Committees on Manses to co-operate with the Assembly's committee. The information gathered was to be reported to the Assembly, together with plans and specifications for manses costing from $1500 to $6000;

* *Minutes G. A. 1864*, p. 290; *1865*, p. 558; *1866*, p. 73

† *New Digest*, p. 574; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 407.

and thanks were presented to Mr. Joseph M. Wilson for his protracted and self-denying labors in this work. In 1873 the committee was discharged, and the work of building manses was added to the duties of the Board of Church Erection, which was "instructed to prosecute the work vigorously;" the money to be used must be expressly contributed for this object. In 1876 the Board reported that, no money having been received for this object, nothing had been done, and therefore suggested that it be no longer considered a part of its duty.*

Permanent Committee on Systematic Beneficence.

What was "the Committee on Benevolence and Finance"?

At the reunion a committee of twenty-one was appointed to recommend to the next Assembly a plan by which the entire benevolent work of the Church may be administered with uniformity and simplicity; and a committee of five from each branch of the Church was appointed to consider the subject of raising funds for the use of the united Church, the methods of doing so, and the objects to which they shall be applied.† The result was the establishment of a "Committee on Benevolence and Finance" in 1871, which was somewhat modified the next year, when the following was adopted: The committee shall consist of fifteen members, mostly businessmen of acknowledged skill in finance, and located in New York. Its duty shall be (1) to promote systematic giving, and (2) to superintend the collections for the

* *Minutes G. A. 1870*, p. 55; *1871*, p. 533; *1873*, p. 552; *1874*, p. 72; *1876*, p. 171.

† *Ibid.*, *1870*, p. 74.

whole benevolent work of the Church. The contributions shall be sent to the Treasurers of the Boards or to this committee; the Treasurer of the Board of Home Missions shall be the Treasurer of this committee. It shall receive monthly statements from the Boards of their financial condition. Periodical giving, as recommended by the Assembly, was enjoined upon the churches. The Presbyteries were required to co-operate through standing committees, who shall report to the Assembly's committee every six months. Churches not contributing to all the Boards shall receive no aid from the funds of the Church.* In 1874 this committee was discontinued, with grateful acknowledgment of the important work accomplished. The principles regarded as emphasized and well established were: (1) Giving should be from spiritual motives, as an act of worship and as a means of grace. (2) It should be frequent and systematic. (3) A definite proportion, not less than one-tenth, of property should be consecrated to the Lord. (4) The benevolent work undertaken by the Assembly is equally obligatory on every member of our Church, according to his ability.*

What was "the Standing Committee on the Benevolent Work of the Church"?

When the Committee on Benevolence and Finance was discontinued in 1874, it was recommended that a Standing Committee on the Benevolent Work of the Church be established, consisting of one member from each Synod, appointed annually by the Synods. Its duty shall be (1) to determine in advance the amount probably needed by each Board, and (2) to advise as to

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 455.
† *Minutes G. A. 1874*, pp. 26, 88.

the modes of disbursement. For the next year $1,622,000 was estimated as required for the benevolent work; and a schedule of contributions was approved by the Assembly.* This committee differs from that on Benevolence and Finance (1) in name; (2) this is annual, the other was permanent; (3) this is appointed by the Synods, that by the Assembly; (4) this is a large committee, that was a small one; (5) this is general and representative, that was local and specific; (6) this is to give advice, that was to superintend collections and disburse funds; and (7) this is to estimate in advance the funds needed by the Boards, and that was to determine how much should be raised in each Synod. It is not, therefore, a continuation of the former committee, but a new one, in its room and stead.†

What was "the Committee of the Synods on the Benevolent Work of the Church"?

In 1875 this name was given to the committee above described, because it was appointed not by the Assembly, but by the Synods. Its duties were (1) to consider the whole work of systematic beneficence; (2) to meet and organize so as to be in session near and during the meetings of the Assembly; (3) to obtain from the Secretaries of the Boards all information needed; (4) to adjust estimates of funds required, to suggest methods for raising the same and advise modes of disbursement. Full reports must be made to the Assembly. The members shall be ex-officio members of the committees of their respective Synods, and report to the Synods the action of this committee and of the Assembly. The Chairmen of the Standing Committees of the Assembly on Church Work shall be invited to sit as corresponding members.

* *Minutes G. A. 1874*, p. 89. † *Ibid., 1875*, p. 530.

The members shall continue in office until their successors are elected, and one-half shall be so elected that they shall hold over until the next year. The Assembly again urged the churches to contribute to all the schemes of church work recommended by it, and advised the adoption of the plan of weekly offerings as an act of worship. A special committee of five Ruling Elders were appointed to report to the next Assembly "any suggestions they may deem expedient as to the more economical administration of the benevolent work of the Church through its several Boards and Committees."* In 1876 grave doubts were expressed as to the constitutionality of this committee, and a special committee were appointed to consider the question.† The following year it was declared (1) that the Assembly has power to direct the lower courts to appoint committees with specified powers, but which would belong to the lower courts, and must report to them, or through them to the Assembly. (2) This committee of the Synods will by its reports "be immediately influential with the people, specially as against any recommendation of the General Assembly or any appeal of the Boards." (3) It may have been "an expedient concession for the time," when at the reunion many changes had to be made, but to render it permanent "would make it a new court, an advisory body, coordinate, in part at least, with the General Assembly." (4) That this committee, while not violating any express provision of the constitution, "infringes upon the venerable dignity and moral power of our supreme court, and is at once unconstitutional and unwise." It was therefore discontinued.‡

* *Minutes G. A. 1875*, pp. 531–533. † *Ibid., 1876*, p. 88.
‡ *Ibid., 1877*, pp. 574, 575.

What is "the Standing Committee on Benevolence"?

This is a committee annually appointed by the Assembly to report on papers on the benevolent work of the Church which may be placed in its hands. The advisability of two committees on this subject was called in question in 1876, and the synodical committee was the next year discontinued, and the Synods were requested to send up annually a statistical report of the benevolent work of the Presbyteries, to be placed in the hands of this committee to be the basis of its report to the Assembly.* But the next year only three of the Synods complied with this request. The Assembly therefore reiterated the request and emphasized it, recommending that "these synodical reports embrace the statistics gathered by the Presbyteries at the meetings in the spring preceding the meetings of the Synods, and contained in the minutes of the General Assembly." †

What is "the Permanent Committee on Systematic Beneficence"?

In 1879 the Standing Committee on Benevolence again reported the almost entire neglect of the recommendation of 1878 by the Synods. After reviewing the history of the past years, the committee considered that it was evident that "the Church wants and will have no new agency in addition to those which she has already to collect and disburse funds and to instruct her Boards as to the amount and the manner of their appropriations." And it recommended the creation of a new committee, to be called "the Permanent Committee on Systematic Beneficence," which shall see that each Synod and Presbytery has a Committee on Benevolence, and secure through these such attention to the subject "that the

* *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 582. † *Ibid., 1878*, p. 104.

matter of systematic beneficence and church work will be kept constantly before Ministers and churches until these three points are attained: (1) Each church has a proper scriptural plan; (2) each church contributes to every Board; and (3) proper and fresh information on the general work of the Presbyterian Church is constantly presented to church courts and individual churches." Such a committee was formed, consisting of three Ministers and three Elders; and it was Resolved, "That, in view of the fact that so many of our churches fail to contribute to all the Boards of our Church, in the judgment of this Assembly the members of all our congregations have a right to an opportunity to contribute at least once a year to each of the Boards, as required by the highest authority of the Church, and the Sessions of the churches have no right to withhold that opportunity." Resolved, "That it is the duty of each Minister in charge to give information, set forth the privilege of giving, and urge the claims of each Board in connection with the annual collection."* The next year this committee presented its first report, stating that the subject had received more attention throughout the Church than for many years previous. The committee was reappointed.† In 1881 this committee was enlarged to twelve, so as to distribute its labors more widely, and Cleveland was made its centre. The work is to "be prosecuted in the future, as in the past two years, in full sympathy with all of our Boards, endeavoring to secure from every member of every church an adequate contribution for each of our objects of benevolence; and that for this purpose every Presbytery and Synod should have a Committee on Systematic Benef-

* *Minutes G. A. 1879*, pp. 620–623. † *Ibid., 1880*, pp. 67, 168.

icence, and each church should have a plan of giving, and each member should be taught to set apart regularly a certain proportion of his income to the Lord." "Each Session is desired to fill, according to the injunctions of the Assembly, the statistical blank sent them in the interests of this committee."* The Board of Publication was requested, after receiving suggestions from the Stated Clerk of the Assembly, the Secretary of the Sabbath-school work and a representative of the Committee of Systematic Beneficence, to issue "a form of a systematic blank, which on a single sheet shall comprise, when filled out, all the facts which the orders of the General Assembly make it necessary for each Session to furnish."†

Presbyterian Historical Society.

What early efforts were made to collect material for the history of the Presbyterian Church?

In 1791 a committee of six was appointed by the Assembly to devise a plan for collecting materials for a history of the Presbyterian Church in North America. They reported, approving the design, stating what information should be obtained, and recommending that each Minister be enjoined to furnish a history of his own church at the next meeting of the Assembly, and that old records of Presbyteries and Synods be examined. The next year the Presbyteries were called upon for these historical reports, but, though diligently engaged in the work, the Presbyteries were not prepared to report. This was the case for several years, the Assembly enjoining the Presbyteries to continue their attention to the subject. In 1804, Rev. Ashbel Green, D. D., and Mr. Ebenezer Hazard were appointed to write a history "under the

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 572. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 592.

care of the General Assembly," and Presbyteries and churches were urged to forward to them the materials already collected. In 1813 this committee reported that considerable progress had been made, but that it was impracticable for them to go on with the work. Rev. Samuel Miller, D. D., was appointed in their place, and directed to continue and complete the history. In 1819, Dr. Green was reappointed, and associated with Dr. Miller. In 1825 this committee desired to be discharged. It was Resolved, "That the request made by the Rev. Drs. Green and Miller, to be released from their appointment to write the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, is received with unfeigned regret." A committee of three, Rev. Drs. Green, Janeway and Ely, were appointed a committee "to receive from Rev. Dr. Green the documents and annals and information prepared by him to be furnished, and to collect such other documents as may be in their power and may be necessary to the completion of the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, with as little delay as possible." They were to report from time to time their progress. All Presbyteries formed since 1797 were urged to compile their several histories and send them to the committee, and an agent was appointed in each Synod to collect all such documents, printed and manuscript, as may throw any light on the history of any part of the Presbyterian Church. In 1836, Rev. L. Halsey, D. D., was appointed in the place of Rev. E. S. Ely, D. D., who resigned.* After great efforts and years of labor valuable histories were collected, but nearly all afterward perished, owing to the fact that when the General Assembly of 1791 ordered

* *Assembly's Digest*, pp. 502–504.

their preparation it failed to make provision for their preservation.*

What is the Presbyterian Historical Society?

It is a society which was organized at the meeting of the General Assembly in Charleston, S. C., in 1852. Some changes were made in 1856. It was incorporated in 1857 by the Legislature of Pennsylvania. The charter was amended in 1877. Its objects are to collect and preserve the materials, and to promote the knowledge, of the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The Executive Committee reports at the annual meeting, and causes an address to be delivered during the meeting of the General Assembly or Synod of each church represented in the society. It is not confined to our denomination, but is open to all the branches of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.†

What action has the Assembly taken in reference to this Society?

In 1853 the O. S. Assembly testified their interest in the organization of this society, and deemed "the objects of sufficient importance to call the attention of the Synod and Presbyteries to such forms of co-operation in securing the materials of our church history as may seem to them expedient." All the manuscript materials pertaining to the history of the Presbyterian Church which have been collected in past years under their authority were committed to the custody of the society.‡ The society is located in Philadelphia.

* *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 539.

† *Webster's History of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 695–700. This was the first volume of the publications of the Historical Society.

‡ *Assembly's Digest*, p. 505.

In 1873 the Assembly, on the recommendation of the Committee on the Centennial Anniversary of the Independence of the United States, ordered that six historical discourses should be prepared, by persons duly appointed, on different periods of our history and methods of our church work, and that on the first Sabbath of July, 1876, the Pastor of each church under the jurisdiction of the Assembly shall deliver a history of his church, and transmit a copy of said history to the Historical Society "for arrangement and for such other disposition of it as the General Assembly or the committee appointed to have charge of the subject may direct." On the same day collections were ordered to be taken in all the churches for the purpose of the erection of a suitable fireproof building in which to preserve the valuable records, books, pamphlets and manuscripts belonging to the society.* In 1877 a valuable report was presented, setting forth the value of the library of the society, and pleading for the means needed for the erection of the fireproof building. The Assembly renewed its recommendations, urging those Pastors to send in their historical discourses who have not yet done so, and that collections be taken for the building and the Endowment Fund.† In 1878 the "General Assembly rejoiced in the success of the Presbyterian Historical Society in their securement of $20,000 for the safe housing of their precious historic treasures; and recommended every Pastor who has failed to do so to prepare and transmit to the society a history of the church under his charge." "The Assembly earnestly commended the objects of the society to the attention and liberality of the

* *Minutes G. A. 1873*, p. 490. † *Ibid.*, *1877*, p. 537.

churches."* This recommendation was repeated in 1879 and 1881. It has now 10,000 volumes and 30,000 pamphlets, many of which are invaluable.†

CHAPTER XIX.

OF MODERATORS.

I. What is a Moderator?

The presiding officer of a meeting for transaction of business is called the President or Moderator. The latter is the title given to the presiding officer in our church courts. A Chairman directs the meetings and work of a committee or commission, and is generally chosen by the court appointing the committee, the first one named being the Chairman. The committee may, however, choose its own Chairman. The Moderator of a court is determined according to the rules of the court.‡ *"It is equally necessary in the judicatories of the Church, as in other assemblies, that there should be a Moderator or President, that the business may be conducted with order and despatch."*

II. What authority has the Moderator?

"He is to be considered as possessing, by delegation from the whole body, all authority necessary for the preservation of order, for convening and adjourning the judicatory, and directing its operations according to the rules of the Church." He is a ministerial officer with delegated authority, and servant of the body over which he presides.§ *"He is to propose to the judicatory every subject*

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 120.

† *Ibid., 1879*, p. 560; *1881*, p. 577. ‡ See pp. 126, 488.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 460; *New Digest*, p. 542.

of deliberation that comes before them. He may propose what appears to him the most regular and speedy way of bringing any business to issue. He shall prevent the members from interrupting each other, and require them in speaking always to address the Chair. He shall prevent a speaker from deviating from the subject and from using personal reflections. He shall silence those who refuse to obey order. He shall prevent members who attempt to leave the judicatory without leave obtained from him. He shall at a proper season, when the deliberations are ended, put the question and call the votes. If the judicatory be equally divided, he shall possess the casting vote. If he be not willing to decide, he shall put the question a second time; and if the judicatory be again equally divided, and he decline to give his vote, the question shall be lost. In all questions he shall give a concise and clear statement of the object of the vote; and, the vote being taken, shall then declare how the question is decided. And he shall likewise be empowered, on any extraordinary emergency, to convene the judicatory by his circular letter before the ordinary time of meeting." He may speak to points of order in preference to other members, rising from his seat for that purpose, and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the judicatory by any two members. He shall appoint all committees, except when the court shall decide otherwise. He may vote with the other members when they vote by ballot; and give a casting vote when the body is equally divided. He cannot have a double vote. While in the chair he cannot take part in any debate, but may leave the chair for that purpose. In judicial cases he has the right to administer oaths to the witnesses. His authority to do so is not derived from the judicatory over which he presides, nor from the Gen-

eral Assembly, but from the constitution, or articles of compact, which our churches have adopted, and by which they have agreed to be governed as a Christian community. Oaths prescribed by ecclesiastical authority in no respect interfere with our relations to civil society, nor are they a violation of those laws of the State which prescribe the manner in which civil oaths shall be administered.*

Must the Moderator be a member of the judicatory?

Not necessarily so, though generally he is. The Moderator of the Session is generally the Pastor of the church. But under certain circumstances the Session may invite a Minister of the Presbytery to preside, and the Presbytery may appoint a Moderator when there is no Pastor. The Minister thus presiding does not become a member of the Session, although he may give a casting vote, according to the provisions of this chapter.†

The Moderator of our General Assembly presides during the organization of the next Assembly and until a Moderator is elected, although he may not be a member of that body. In case he be absent, the last Moderator present, or if there be none, the senior member present, shall take the chair. The "last Moderator present" may be interpreted (1) according to the decision of the Assembly of 1835, to mean present, although not a member (the N. S. Assembly reaffirmed this in 1861)—or (2), according to the deliverance of the O. S. Assembly in 1843, that it is the deliberate judgment of the General Assembly that no person is authorized to open the session of the Assembly or preside at the opening of the said session except the Moderator of the Assembly

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 204, 205, 460, 530; *Book of Discipline*, ch. vi., sect. ix. See p. 491.

† See p. 126.

immediately preceding, or in his absence a commissioner to the Assembly.* In 1880, the Moderator of the preceding Assembly being absent, Rev. J. Eells, D. D., the Moderator in 1877, preached the opening sermon and presided until the new Moderator was chosen. He was not a commissioner, and no objections were made. But the Assembly some days later resolved to change Rule II. of the General Rules for Judicatories † by inserting the words, "being a commissioner," after the words, "the last Moderator present."‡

Must the Moderator ever vacate the chair?

If the Moderator be a member of the inferior court from whose decision an appeal or complaint is made, he should during the trial vacate the chair, and the last Moderator, being a commissioner, present, or some other Minister, should preside. §

III. How are Moderators chosen?

If the church be vacant, the Presbytery should appoint one of its Ministers to be Moderator of the Session.‖ If the congregation call a Pastor, and he becomes Moderator of the Session by the act of Presbytery installing him Pastor, if at any time he be sick or absent, or if it be thought best for prudential reasons that the Pastor should not preside, the Session may invite a Minister of the same Presbytery to take his place, or if this be "impracticable without great inconvenience," they may select one of their own number to preside.‖

"*The Moderator of the Presbytery shall be chosen from year to year, or at every meeting of the Presbytery, as the Presbytery may think best.*" This is understood as au-

* See p. 278. *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 201, 460; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 281. † See p. 490. ‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, pp. 3, 45.
§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 587. ‖ See p. 128.

thorizing the usage of some Presbyteries of electing the Moderator to serve for six months. Nominations may be made by any member of the body. If only one is proposed, the vote may be taken at once. But if several are nominated, they are each called upon to vote and to retire while the roll is called, and the votes are given *vivâ voce*. In some Presbyteries the choice is made by ballot. A committee is appointed to bring in the person elected, who is inducted into office by the retiring Moderator.*

"*The Moderator of the Synod and of the General Assembly shall be chosen at each meeting of those judicatories.*" The mode of nomination and electing is the same as that described above in the case of the Presbyteries, except that in making the nomination the presbyterial relation of the Minister is mentioned. This became a standing rule of the Assembly in 1791.† The O. S. Assembly in 1846, and from 1851 to 1869, Resolved, "That a majority of all the votes given for Moderator be necessary for a choice."‡ The mode of installation is as follows, according to the rule adopted in 1791: The newly-elected Moderator is brought before the Assembly by a committee appointed for that purpose, and presented to the retiring Moderator, "who shall address him and the house in the following or like manner: 'Sir, it is my duty to inform you, and to announce to this house, that you are duly elected to the office of Moderator of this General Assembly. For your direction in office, and for the direction of this Assembly in all your deliberations, before I leave this seat I am to read to you and this house the rules contained in the records of this Assembly, which I doubt not will be carefully observed by both in conducting the business

* See below. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 202. ‡ *Ibid.*

that may come before you.'" Formerly, these rules of order were read. It has, however, become the usage to put the book containing them into the hands of the Moderator, making a modification in the above language. The Moderator shall proceed thus: "Now, having read these rules according to order for your instruction as Moderator, and for the direction of all the members in the management of business, praying that Almighty God may direct and bless all the deliberations of this Assembly for the glory of his name and for the edification and comfort of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, I resign my place and office as Moderator." Generally, he does not confine himself to the above language, and the new Moderator often makes a short reply to him and an address to the Assembly.*

What are the rules read to the Moderator?

The General Rules for Judicatories. They are referred to in the above form of induction, which was adopted in 1791, but were not submitted to the Presbyteries, and therefore form no part of the constitution. They have received several modifications. At the reunion it was found that the rules used by the two branches were very nearly alike, and only few changes were made. They are as follows:

General Rules for Judicatories.

I. "The Moderator shall take the chair precisely at the hour to which the judicatory stands adjourned, and shall immediately call the members to order, and on the appearance of a quorum shall open the session with prayer."

II. "If a quorum be assembled at the hour appoint-

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 203.

ed, and the Moderator be absent, the last Moderator present, being a commissioner, or, if there be none, the senior member present, shall be requested to take his place without delay until a new election." (The clause, "being a commissioner," was added in 1880.)†

III. "If a quorum be not assembled at the hour appointed, any two members shall be competent to adjourn from time to time, that an opportunity may be given for a quorum to assemble."

IV. "It shall be the duty of the Moderator, at all times, to preserve order, and to endeavor to conduct all business before the judicatory to a speedy and proper result."

V. "It shall be the duty of the Moderator carefully to keep notes of the several articles of business which may be assigned for particular days, and to call them up at the time appointed."

VI. "The Moderator may speak to points of order in preference to other members, rising from his seat for that purpose, and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the judicatory by any two members."

VII. "The Moderator shall appoint all committees, except in those cases in which the judicatory shall decide otherwise."

VIII. "When a vote is taken by ballot in any judicatory, the Moderator shall vote with the other members; but he shall not vote in any other case unless the judicatory be equally divided; when, if he do not choose to vote, the question shall be lost."

IX. "The person first named on any committee shall be considered as the chairman thereof, whose duty it shall be to convene the committee, and, in case of his absence

* *Minutes G. A. 1880,* p. 45.

or inability to act, the second-named member shall take his place and perform his duties."

X. "It shall be the duty of the Clerk, as soon as possible after the commencement of the sessions of every judicatory, to form a complete roll of the members present, and put the same into the hands of the Moderator. And it shall also be the duty of the Clerk, whenever any additional members take their seats, to add their names in their proper places to the said roll."

XI. "It shall be the duty of the Clerk immediately to file all papers in the order in which they have been read, with proper endorsements, and to keep them in perfect order."

XII. "The minutes of the last meeting of the judicatory shall be presented at the commencement of its sessions, and if requisite read and corrected."

XIII. "Business left unfinished at the last sitting is ordinarily to be taken up first."

XIV. "A motion must be seconded, and afterward repeated by the Moderator, or read aloud, before it is debated; and every motion shall be reduced to writing if the Moderator or any member require it."

XV. "Any member who shall have made a motion shall have liberty to withdraw it, with consent of his second, before any debate has taken place thereon, but not afterward without the leave of the judicatory."

XVI. "If a motion under debate contains several parts, any two members may have it divided, and a question taken on each part."

XVII. "When various motions are made with respect to the filling of blanks with particular numbers or times, the question shall always be first taken on the highest number and longest time."

XVIII. "Motions to lay on the table, to take up business, to adjourn, and the call for the previous question, shall be put without debate. On questions of order, postponement or commitment no member shall speak more than once. On all other questions each member may speak twice, but not oftener without express leave of the judicatory."

XIX. "When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received unless to adjourn, to lay on the table, to postpone indefinitely, to postpone until a day certain, to commit or amend; which several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they are herein arranged; and the motion for adjournment shall be always in order."

XX. "An amendment, and also an amendment to an amendment, may be moved on any motion, but a motion to amend an amendment to an amendment shall not be in order. Action on amendments shall precede action on the original motion."

XXI. "A distinction shall be observed between a motion to lay on the table for the present and a motion to lay on the table unconditionally—viz.: a motion to lay on the table for the present shall be taken without debate; and if carried in the affirmative, the effect shall be to place the subject on the docket, and it may be taken up and considered at any subsequent time. But a motion to lay on the table unconditionally shall be taken without debate; and if carried in the affirmative, it shall not be in order to take up the subject during the same meeting of the judicatory without a vote of reconsideration."

XXII. "The previous question shall be put in this form, namely: Shall the main question be now put? It

shall only be admitted when demanded by a majority of the members present; and the effect shall be to put an end to all debate and bring the body to a direct vote—first, on a motion to commit the subject under consideration (if such motion shall have been made); secondly, if the motion for commitment does not prevail, on pending amendments; and lastly, on the main question."

XXIII. "A question shall not again be called up or reconsidered at the same session of the judicatory at which it has been decided, unless by consent of two-thirds of the members who were present at the decision, and unless the motion to reconsider be made and seconded by persons who voted with the majority."

XXIV. "A subject which has been indefinitely postponed, either by the operation of the previous question or by a motion for indefinite postponement, shall not be again called up during the same sessions of the judicatory, unless by the consent of three-fourths of the members who were present at the decision."

XXV. "Members ought not, without weighty reasons, to decline voting, as this practice might leave the decision of very interesting questions to a small proportion of the judicatory. Silent members, unless excused from voting, must be considered as acquiescing with the majority."

XXVI. "When the Moderator has commenced taking the vote, no further debate or remark shall be admitted, unless there has evidently been a mistake, in which case the mistake shall be rectified, and the Moderator shall recommence taking the vote."

XXVII. "The yeas and nays on any question shall not be recorded, unless required by one-third of the members present."

XXVIII. "No member in the course of debate shall be allowed to indulge in personal reflections."

XXIX. "If more than one member rise to speak at the same time, the member who is most distant from the Moderator's chair shall speak first."

XXX. "When more than three members of the judicatory shall be standing at the same time, the Moderator shall require all to take their seats, the person only excepted who may be speaking."

XXXI. "Every member, when speaking, shall address himself to the Moderator, and shall treat his fellow-members, and especially the Moderator, with decorum and respect."

XXXII. "No speaker shall be interrupted, unless he be out of order, or for the purpose of correcting mistakes or misrepresentations."

XXXIII. "Without express permission no member of a judicatory, while business is going on, shall engage in private conversation, nor shall members address one another, nor any person present, but through the Moderator."

XXXIV. "It is indispensable that members of ecclesiastical judicatories maintain great gravity and dignity while judicially convened; that they attend closely in their speeches to the subject under consideration, and avoid prolix and desultory harangues; and when they deviate from the subject it is the privilege of any member, and the duty of the Moderator, to call them to order."

XXXV. "If any member act, in any respect, in a disorderly manner, it shall be the privilege of any member, and the duty of the Moderator, to call him to order."

XXXVI. "If any member consider himself aggrieved by a decision of the Moderator, it shall be his privilege to appeal to the judicatory, and the question on the appeal shall be taken without debate."

XXXVII. "No member shall retire from any judicatory without the leave of the Moderator, nor withdraw from it to return home without the consent of the judicatory."

XXXVIII. "All judicatories have the right to sit in private on business which in their judgment ought not to be matter of public speculation."

XXXIX. "Besides the right to sit judicially in private whenever they think proper to do so, all judicatories have the right to hold what are commonly called 'interlocutory meetings,' in which members may freely converse together, without the formalities which are usually necessary in judicial proceedings."

XL. "Whenever a judicatory is about to sit in a judicial capacity, it shall be the duty of the Moderator solemnly to announce from the chair that the body is about to pass to the consideration of the business assigned for trial, and to enjoin on the members to recollect and regard their high character as judges of a court of Jesus Christ, and the solemn duty in which they are about to act."

XLI. "In all cases before a judicatory, where there is an accuser or prosecutor, it is expedient that there be a committee of the judicatory appointed (provided the number of members be sufficient to admit it without inconvenience), who shall be called the 'Judicial Committee,' and whose duty it shall be to digest and arrange all papers, and to prescribe, under the direction of the judicatory, the whole order of proceedings. The members of this committee shall be entitled, notwithstanding their

performance of this duty, to sit and vote in the cause as members of the judicatory."

XLII. "But in case of process on the ground of general rumor, where there is, of course, no particular accuser. there may be a committee appointed (if convenient) who shall be called the 'Committee of Prosecution,' and who shall conduct the whole course on the part of the prosecution. The members of this committee shall not be permitted to sit in judgment in the case."

XLIII. "The Moderator of every judicatory above the church Session, in finally closing its sessions, in addition to prayer, may cause to be sung an appropriate psalm or hymn, and shall pronounce the apostolical benediction."*

What Standing Orders were adopted?

In 1879 the following Standing Orders were adopted and printed in the Appendix to the Minutes. It was Resolved, "That they be regarded as supplemental to and forming a part of the Standing Rules for Judicatories:"

"1. The General Assembly meet invariably on the third Thursday of May, annually, at 11 o'clock A. M."

"2. The credentials of commissioners and delegates are to be presented at a previous hour of the same day or of the preceding day, according to public notice, to the Stated and Permanent Clerks, acting as a Permanent Committee on Commissions."

"3. The Lord's Supper is to be celebrated by the Assembly on the evening of Thursday, the first day of their sessions."

"4. The evening of Friday, the second day of the sessions, is assigned to a popular meeting in behalf of the Sabbath-school interests of the Church."

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 205–208.

"5. The evening of the first Tuesday of the sessions is appropriated to the consideration of the Home Mission work of the Church."

"6. The evening of the first Wednesday of the sessions is appropriated, in like manner, to the Foreign Mission work of the Church."

"7. The evening of the second Thursday of the sessions is assigned for the reception of Delegates from corresponding bodies."

"8. The Stated Clerk shall distinctly announce to the Assembly the titles of all papers put into his hands for reference before they are so referred." *

May an Elder be chosen Moderator?

In the Session the Pastor or some other Minister of the Presbytery is the proper Moderator. In emergencies, when a Minister cannot be obtained "without great inconvenience," an Elder may preside.†

In the higher courts such an emergency cannot occur, for a certain number of Ministers must be present to form a quorum. And although the word "Minister" is not used in describing the Moderator, several ministerial duties are required of him, such as preaching a sermon, offering the ordaining prayer, and pronouncing the apostolic benediction. In the Assembly the Moderators have always been Ministers.‡

How shall the Moderator open and close the meetings of the judicatory?

The Moderator of the Session shall always open and close the meeting with prayer, offered by himself or by some one at his request.§ The constitu-

* *Minutes G. A. 1879*, pp. 559–737.
† See pp. 126, 128.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, pp. 188–190.
§ See p. 170.

tion requires this in the higher courts.* The rule is binding also on the Sessions. The Presbyteries take exceptions to the sessional records if they do not show that the meetings are opened and closed with prayer, and are sustained in this by the Assembly.†

What is an Adsessor?

In the Reformed (Dutch) Church a Vice-Moderator is chosen, and called the Adsessor. In 1878 a proposition was referred to the Committee on Revision of the "Book of Discipline," that a similar officer be elected annually in our Assembly. In the Church of Scotland the Assessor is the official adviser of the Moderator.‡

CHAPTER XX.

OF CLERKS.

What is a Clerk?

The person appointed to make and preserve the records of a meeting is called the Secretary or Clerk. In courts of our Church this officer is called the Clerk. "*Every judicatory shall choose a Clerk to record their transactions, whose continuance shall be during pleasure. It shall be the duty of the Clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records carefully, and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required; and such extracts, under the hand of the Clerk, shall be considered as authentic vouchers of the fact which they*

* *Form of Government*, ch. x., sect. xi.; ch. xi., sect. v.; ch. xii., sect. viii. See pp. 229, 243, 280.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 194; *Minutes G. A. 1877*, p. 575. See pp. 170, 497.

‡ *Ibid., 1878*, p. 102.

declare, in any ecclesiastical judicatory and to every part of the Church."

How long does a Clerk continue in office?

His "*continuance shall be during pleasure.*" He is the permanent officer of the judicatory, and often retains his position for many years. At first the Clerk of Presbytery was elected at each meeting. This was the custom in Synod until the organization of the Assembly. In 1773 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia re-elected the Clerks of the preceding year, and after that date sometimes re-elected one or both Clerks—not, however, continuing them in office longer than for two years.*

Must the Clerk be a member of the judicatory?

The Moderator and Clerk are ministerial officers. "In respect to their office they are servants merely, and not members of the body. Of the Clerk this would seem to be unquestionably true." "As far as any provision of the book is involved, it is plain that a judicatory may select any convenient person, though not a member, to record its transactions and discharge all other duties pertaining to a Clerk. For the part of those duties usually devolved upon a temporary Clerk we believe it is no infrequent thing for a Presbytery to employ a Licentiate or other person, not a member of the body." So the N. S. Assembly said in 1861.† Yet, as he is "*to preserve the records,*" he should be under the control of the court.

Who is the Clerk of Session?

Any one chosen by the Session. Generally, he is a member of the Session. It is his duty to make a true record, which must be approved at the next meeting, to take

* *Presbyterian Records*, pp. 9, 48, 234, 291, 437.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 461; *New Digest*, p. 176.

charge of the books and papers, to give certified copies of portions when properly requested (by order of Session), to issue citations, to present the minutes to the Presbytery for its review, to keep the sessional registers and the records of congregational meetings called by the Session.*

Who is the Clerk of Presbytery?

One chosen by the Presbytery, and generally a member. His duties are to keep the record, which must be submitted to the Synod for review every year, together with a full report of changes and a narrative of the state of religion. A similar report and narrative must also be sent to each General Assembly.†

What is a Stated Clerk?

In the Presbytery, the Synod and the General Assembly it has been found that the Clerk needs assistance, especially during the meetings of those judicatories. The Clerk is called the Stated Clerk, to distinguish him from those appointed to help him. At first, the Clerk was able to perform the whole duty required, but after the union of the two Synods of New York and Philadelphia his work so increased that in 1763 he was granted an assistant. They were called the Clerk and his Assistant.‡ At the organization of the Assembly the title "Stated Clerk" appears in describing the Clerk of that body, and the Clerk of Presbytery, of Synod and of the General Assembly have since been called the Stated Clerk of those judicatories.§ His salary was in 1870 fixed at $400 per annum. In addition to the duties described above, the Assembly in 1801 added that of notifying the Presbyteries if their commissioners neglected their duties, were inattentive to the rules of decorum or left the Assembly

* See pp. 165–170.

† See p. 226.

‡ *Presbyterian Records*, p. 322.

§ *New Digest*, p. 174.

without permission; and in 1807 that of printing extracts of the minutes and distributing the copies as the Assembly may direct. In 1871 he was made also the Treasurer of the Assembly, and $100 was added to his salary.*

What power has the Stated Clerk over books and papers?

When he receives them from a former Stated Clerk or other parties, he should give a receipt for the same; and he shall not deliver any records or papers in his possession to any person, except by the order of the Assembly, and then he must obtain a receipt.† This rule applies also to Stated Clerks of the lower courts. App., p. 547.

What is a Permanent Clerk?

In 1802 the Assembly declared that "the business of former Assemblies has been impeded by the want of a Recording Clerk possessing that facility in the business which is acquired by experience," and "it is not to be expected that any one person should perform this service permanently without receiving an adequate compensation for his labor;" and therefore Resolved, "That a permanent Recording Clerk be chosen, whose duty it shall be from year to year to draught the minutes of the Assembly during their sessions, and afterward to perform such services respecting the transcribing, printing and distributing the extracts as shall be assigned to him from time to time; and that he be paid out of the funds of the Assembly three dollars per day for the time he shall be employed, as well during the sessions of the Assembly as after their dissolution." He shall be furnished with stationery, make the original draught of all the minutes, and "give certified copies as occasion may require of all such as may be proper to be transmitted to the Trustees of the General

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 209. † *Assembly's Digest*, p. 283.

Assembly or any of their officers." After the adjournment he shall carefully revise the manuscript, render it correct and deliver it to the Stated Clerk. In 1870 the salary of the Permanent Clerk was fixed at $300 per annum.* The Permanent Clerks of Presbyteries and Synods have similar duties. In the smaller Presbyteries they are not needed.

What is the Temporary Clerk?

When the Assembly in 1802 established the office of Permanent Clerk, it Resolved also, "That a Temporary Clerk be chosen by each Assembly, as heretofore, to read the minutes and communications to the Assembly, and otherwise aid the Permanent Clerk as occasion may require, and that he be paid one dollar per day for his services." From 1856 the N. S. Assembly chose two Temporary Clerks. In the O. S. Assembly the same custom prevailed. After the reunion three Temporary Clerks were found necessary, and since 1873 four have been yearly appointed.† In the Presbyteries and Synods one or more Temporary Clerks are chosen at each meeting. Temporary Clerks receive generally no pecuniary compensation. In 1880, however, the Assembly ordered that the Treasurer pay to them for their services the sum of twenty-five dollars each.‡

What is an acting Permanent Clerk?

One appointed by the court to perform the duties of the Permanent Clerk in the case of his absence or sickness. In 1881 the Assembly, hearing of the continued ill-health of the Permanent Clerk, Resolved, "That we appoint Rev. William H. Roberts acting Permanent

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 210.
† *Ibid.*, p. 211; *Minutes G. A. 1873*, p. 476; *1881*, p. 509.
‡ *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 85.

Clerk for the coming year, assigning him the duties and the pay pertaining to the office."*

Who may be chosen Clerk?

He is usually, but not necessarily, a member of the judicatory.† In the General Assembly the Stated and the Permanent Clerks are often not commissioners. Not unfrequently Elders are appointed, especially as Temporary Clerks.‡ In 1858 the N. S. Assembly decided that the privileges of corresponding members be granted to their Stated and Permanent Clerks in matters pertaining to their official duties.§ Since the reunion these privileges have been accorded to them.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF VACANT CONGREGATIONS ASSEMBLING FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP.

What are the benefits to be expected from weekly assemblies of the people?

"*Considering the great importance of weekly assembling the people for the public worship of God, in order thereby to improve their knowledge, to confirm their habits of worship and their desire of the public ordinances, to augment their reverence for the most high God, and to promote the charitable affections which unite men most firmly in society.*"

Should vacant congregations hold such services?

"*It is recommended that every vacant congregation meet together on the Lord's Day, at one or more places, for the*

* *Minutes G. A. 1881*, p. 514.
† See p. 500.
‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 211.
§ *New Digest*, p. 167.

purpose of prayer, singing praises and reading the Holy Scriptures, together with the works of such approved divines as the Presbytery, within whose bounds they are, may recommend and they may be able to procure." The Sessions of vacant churches should endeavor to obtain a Pastor as soon as possible,* and to obtain the services of a Minister on every Lord's Day. When this is not possible, regular services should be maintained. Services should also be, when practicable, on one or more days during the week, and a Sabbath-school should be established and maintained for the instruction of the young, under the direction of the Session.†

Who shall conduct these services?

"*That Elders or Deacons be the persons who shall preside and select portions of Scriptures and of the other books to be read, and to see that the whole be conducted in a becoming and orderly manner.*" These duties also devolve upon the Elders in the sickness or absence of the Pastor, when he is unable to procure the presence of another Minister.‡

May an Elder explain the Scriptures in the absence of the Pastor?

The O. S. Assembly in 1856 decided that the Presbytery of Louisiana was right in considering "it not inconsistent with the principles of our Church for Ruling Elders, in the absence of the Pastor, to read the Scriptures and explain them, and to endeavor to enforce the truth upon the conscience by suitable exhortations."§

What supervision should the Presbytery take over vacant churches?

The Presbytery should take special charge of its va-

* See p. 328. † See p. 55. ‡ See pp. 55, 80.

§ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 462.

cant churches,* and should interrogate the Elders of such churches concerning their obedience to this chapter of the "Form of Government." So the O. S. Assembly in 1847.†

CHAPTER XXII.

OF COMMISSIONERS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

I. Who are commissioners to the General Assembly?

They are the representatives of the Presbyteries and members of the General Assembly.‡

When are they elected?

"*The commissioners to the General Assembly shall always be appointed by the Presbytery from which they come at its last stated meeting immediately preceding the meeting of the General Assembly; provided that there be a sufficient interval between that time and the meeting of the Assembly for the commissioners to attend to their duty in due season; otherwise the Presbytery shall make the appointment at any stated meeting not more than seven months preceding the meeting of the Assembly.*"

Can a commissioner be received without a formal election?

All irregularities must be reported to the Assembly by its Committee on Elections, and be judged by that body before the commissioner can take his seat. In the O. S. Assembly, Ministers and Ruling Elders were admitted when it was made evident that small or missionary Presbyteries designed to make the appointment, but failed to do so for want of a quorum at the spring meeting, and

* See pp. 211–214. † *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 462. ‡ See p. 248.

when, though the election had been made, the commission had been delayed, and when a missionary Presbytery had elected before the time prescribed by the constitution. Each case must be judged on its own merits, and therefore there is sometimes a real or apparent inconsistency in the decisions. In 1843 the Assembly refused to admit Rev. D. M. Smith. The Presbytery had failed to obtain a quorum at its spring meeting; those present requested the Assembly to receive him as a commissioner, and two absent Ministers joined in the request; and it was believed that had there been a meeting his election would have been unanimous. Yet, in 1865, Elder H. Smith was admitted on the request of several Ministers and Elders of a Presbytery which for two years had been unable to obtain a quorum.*

Can commissioners from newly-organized Presbyteries be received?

In 1822 the Assembly adopted as a standing rule that such commissioners must produce satisfactory evidence that their Presbyteries have been regularly organized according to the constitution, and are in connection with the General Assembly, and that they may furnish such evidence before the election of a Moderator. In 1837 it was further required that such Presbyteries must be duly reported by the Synod with which they are connected, and the same rule was applied to Presbyteries whose names have been changed. If the Assembly is convinced that any new Presbytery has been formed to increase unduly the representation, the Assembly may, on a majority vote, not only refuse to receive the commissioners, but require the Synod to reunite the new Presbytery to that to which it formerly belonged.†

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 463, 464. † *Ibid.*, p. 465.

May a "Committee-man" be elected a commissioner?

The constitution requires that "the General Assembly shall consist of an equal delegation of Bishops and Elders from each Presbytery."* But under the "Plan of Union" members of the Standing Committee of Churches formed under its provisions were received as delegates to Presbyteries, and had there all the rights of ordained Ruling Elders. By degrees these Committee-men were admitted as members of Synod and General Assembly. But in 1831 this was declared to be inexpedient and of questionable constitutionality. The next year the Assembly refused to recognize their election.†

May a commissioner leave before the close of the Assembly?

In case of real necessity he may obtain permission to do so from the Committee of Leave of Absence. But the Assembly has repeatedly enjoined the Presbyteries to appoint "as commissioners those only who are able and willing to remain to the close of its sessions, to the end that all the work of the Assembly may be performed by all its members." Commissioners are required to make their arrangements to be present through the whole session of the Assembly, and to report of their fidelity in this matter, which should be recorded on the minutes of the Presbytery. The Clerk of the Assembly is required to notify the Presbyteries when their commissioners neglect their duties or leave without permission.‡

What is meant by the "principal" and "alternate" commissioners?

The principal is the one elected to represent the Presbytery. "*And as much as possible to prevent all failure*

* *Form of Government*, ch. xii., sect. ii. See pp. 248, 512.

† *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 466. See p. 263. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 465. See p. 501.

in the representation of the Presbyteries, arising from unforeseen accidents to those first appointed, it may be expedient for each Presbytery, in the room of each commissioner, to appoint also an alternate commissioner to supply his place in case of necessary absence."

May a commissioner after taking his seat resign to his alternate?

This was permitted until 1827, when it was Resolved, "That in the judgment of this General Assembly the construction of the constitution ('Form of Government,' ch. xxii., sect. i.) which allows commissioners, after holding their seats for a time, to resign them to their alternates, or which allows alternates to sit for a while and then resign their places to their principals, is erroneous; that the practice growing out of this construction is inexpedient, and that it ought to be discontinued." The Assembly, has, however, several times, "under the peculiar circumstances of the case," permitted alternates to give up their seats to their principals, and the O. S. Assembly in one case at least allowed the principal to resign in favor of his alternate. These were regarded as exceptions "under peculiar circumstances." The reasons for the above decision should not be lightly laid aside. It should be remembered that "the practice (of these changes) is thought to be derogatory to the dignity and usefulness of the General Assembly."* No change can be permitted during the hearing of a judicial case.

Does this rule apply to adjourned meetings?

An adjourned meeting is the continuation of the sessions of the same body; and, as in Presbyteries and Synods, so in the Assembly, an adjourned meeting should be composed of the same commissioners. This

* *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 467, 468.

was the direction given by the N. S. Assembly when informing the Presbyteries that the two Assemblies would hold adjourned meetings at Pittsburg to consummate the reunion in the fall of 1869. The O. S. Assembly, however, when it met according to its adjournment, decided that all alternates whose principals were absent should be admitted, and informed the other Assembly of this action.*

II. How are commissioners to be certified?

"Each commissioner, before his name shall be enrolled as a member of the Assembly, shall produce from his Presbytery a commission, under the hand of the Moderator and Clerk, in the following or like form, viz.:"

"The Presbytery of ———, being met at ——— on the — day of ———, doth hereby appoint ———, Bishop of the congregation of ——— [or ———, Ruling Elder in the congregation of ———, as the case may be], (to which the Presbytery may, if they think proper, make a substitution in the following form), or in case of his absence, then ———, Bishop of the congregation of ——— [or ———, Ruling Elder in the congregation of ———, as the case may be], to be a commissioner on behalf of this Presbytery to the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, to meet at ———, on the — day of ———, A. D. ——, or whenever the said Assembly may happen to sit; to consult, vote and determine on all things that may come before that body, according to the principles and constitution of this Church and the word of God. And of his diligence herein he is to render an account at his return."

"Signed by order of the Presbytery,

"———, Moderator.

"———, Clerk."

* See p. 277.

"And the Presbytery shall make record of the appointment."

What is the "Committee on Commissions"?

The General Assembly is opened by a sermon by the Moderator of the previous year, and is by him constituted with prayer. After which, according to the rules of organization adopted in 1826, the Moderator shall appoint a Committee on Commissions. The Assembly shall take a recess to afford time for the committee to examine the commissions of those claiming to be members. In the afternoon of the same day the committee shall report the names of those whose commissions are regular, and the roll is thus determined; and the Assembly shall be ready for business. In 1829 the Permanent and Stated Clerks were appointed a Standing Committee of Commissions, and it was determined that hereafter all commissions be handed to this committee on the morning of the day on which this Assembly opens, previous to eleven o'clock, and that any presented during the sessions of the Assembly be handed to this committee.*

What is the "Committee on Elections"?

After the Committee on Commissions has reported, those members whose commissions are approved take their seats, "and the first act of the Assembly, when thus ready for business, shall be the appointment of a Committee on Elections, whose duty it shall be to examine all informal and unconstitutional commissions, and to report on the same as soon as practicable." * It would seem that the report of this committee must be handed in and acted upon, and the roll of the Assembly thus completed, before the Moderator and Temporary Clerks could be

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 295; *New Digest*, p. 156; *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 202.

elected.* But at present the rule is to proceed with the election of the Moderator and Clerks after hearing the report of the Committee on Commissions, and the Committee of Elections is appointed by the new Moderator when he forms the standing committees.†

What irregularities are found in commissions?

1. No commission, but some testimony of appointment.
2. An extract from minutes, signed by the Stated Clerk.
3. A commission lacking proper signatures.
4. Without date.
5. Dated more than seven months before.
6. Not in due form.
7. From Presbyteries not reported by the Synods.
8. No commission, but satisfactory proof of the wish of a missionary Presbytery which could not meet for a formal election.
9. The commission lost or delayed in transmission. The usage is that where satisfactory evidence is given of the actual appointment of the commissioner his name is enrolled.‡
10. Too many commissioners are sent.

Can the Assembly go behind the commission?

In 1826 the Assembly was informed that one of its members was not an ordained Elder, but appointed, it was supposed, under the Plan of Union. The Assembly said, Every Presbytery must judge of the qualifications of its own members, and the Assembly can only take notice by way of appeal or reference or complaint. "It would be a dangerous precedent, and would lead to the

* *Assembly's Digest*, p. 281.

† See *Minutes of G. Assembly* since 1872.

‡ *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 469; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 285.

destruction of all order in the Church of Christ, to permit unauthorized verbal testimony to set aside an authenticated written document."*

Who are to be rejected when a Presbytery sends more than its proportion of commissioners?

The O. S. Assembly decided that in such cases those last appointed should be rejected, their election being invalid and out of order.†

III. How are the expenses of the commissioners to be met?

"*In order, as far as possible, to procure a respectable and full delegation to all of our judicatories, it is proper that the expenses of Ministers and Elders in their attendance on these judicatories be defrayed by the bodies which they respectively represent.*" In 1792 the Assembly ordered "that each Presbytery pay their own commissioners for the future and for attending the present Assembly." In 1803 the expense of attending the Assembly from distant Presbyteries was referred to the Presbyteries, and the following year it was recommended that the Presbyteries of the Synod of New York and New Jersey and of the Synod of Philadelphia advise their churches to take an annual collection to aid in the payment of the expenses of commissioners from the more distant parts of the country, and that the money be placed in the hands of the Treasurer of the corporation, and paid to the persons who may attend as commissioners, according to the direction of the Assembly.*

What was the Commissioners' Fund?

It originated from the above action. In 1806 and 1807 a more comprehensive plan was adopted, by which all the churches were urged to contribute annually to this Commissioners' Fund, and in 1833 a similar recommendation

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 470. † *Assembly's Digest*, p. 285.

was passed.* In 1801 Presbyteries were advised, in their settlements with their commissioners, to allow no compensation for services as members of the Assembly if they neglected their duty, were inattentive to the rules of decorum, abruptly left the Assembly or returned home without leave of absence. In 1818 it was required that the member entitled to draw from this fund make written and full application within three days after the appointment of the Committee on the Commissioners' Fund, or forfeit his portion of said fund. In 1827 it was ordered that if a commissioner obtained leave of absence within the first six days of the session of the Assembly, he shall receive no part of the fund, save by the order of the Assembly. And in 1833 Presbyteries not contributing to this fund were declared not entitled to draw from it for their commissioners; and certain other Presbyteries were permitted to draw only the amount which they had respectively paid in.†

What was the Committee on Mileage?

The money contributed to the Commissioners' Fund was placed in the hands of a Committee on Mileage, and distributed to those commissioners who claimed it in conformity with the above decision, according to the number of miles traveled by each to the place of meeting. This seems to have been the usage before the division, and afterward in both Assemblies. The N. S. Assembly in 1856 proposed to the Presbyteries an addition to the constitution on this subject, but a majority of the Presbyteries took no action. In 1857 the following recommendations were adopted: Presbyteries were urged to contribute annually their full proportion, which shall be determined

* *Presbyterian Digest*, p. 471.

† *New Digest*, pp. 174, 179; *Assembly's Digest*, p. 299.

by the number of communicants, and apportioned among the churches as the Presbyteries think best. The Standing Committee on Mileage shall report the amount needed for the traveling expenses of the commissioners and the expenses of the next Assembly, and the rate that will be adequate. Before the fourth day of the session the amount contributed shall be paid to the Committee on Mileage, and each commissioner shall present his bill for necessary traveling expenses and mileage. These bills shall be paid as far as possible, after deducting from the fund the expenses of the Assembly. Only those commissioners can apply whose Presbyteries have sent their full proportion to the fund. Each Minister and vacant church of Presbyteries contributing the full quota shall receive a copy of the Minutes. The rate for the year 1858 was five cents for each communicant.*

What plan was adopted at the reunion?

The same plan was adopted at the reunion, except that the bills of commissioners must be handed to the committee before the fifth day (instead of the fourth),† and that commissioners from Presbyteries in foreign lands shall receive their necessary traveling expenses *pro rata* from their place of residence in this country. The assessment for the Commissioners' and Contingent Funds for 1871 was fixed at six cents per communicant. In 1880 it was made for the next year five cents per communicant. In 1873 it was found that this plan was acceptable and worked well. Out of 158 Presbyteries—which number includes a part of the freedmen and foreign Presbyteries—not one failed to pay the full assessment, and all the claims for mileage were fully met.‡

* *New Digest*, pp. 181–184; *Presbyterian Digest*, pp. 471, 472.

† See p. 516. ‡ *Pres. Dig.*, pp. 472–474; *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 184.

In 1875 the commissioners were required hereafter to present their bills as early as the fourth day of the session. The Assembly further explained that "it is understood that commissioners, both in coming to and returning from the Assembly, will avail themselves of any commutation of fares that may be offered in season, and that in other cases they are to take, when practicable, the most economical route; no allowance to be made for extra accommodations on the way. Also, that no one will charge for return expenses unless he intends to go back to his field of labor, and that no one on a business-tour or excursion of pleasure will make a convenience of the meeting of the Assembly and expect payment for his traveling expenses from the Mileage Fund." The Committee of Arrangements for the respective Assemblies shall early announce (not later, if practicable, than the first week of May) what arrangements have been made for commutation of railroad and steamboat fares.*

What is "the Supplemental Contingent Expense Fund"?

Since the reunion the Assembly has been so large a body, and with so much business to transact, that the invitations to entertain it have been very few. Various plans have been proposed for decreasing the size of the Assembly by a change in the representation,† but these have been rejected by the Presbyteries. In 1877, with a view to immediate relief in the difficulties attending the entertainment of the Assembly, it was Resolved, "That in addition to the mileage assessment the Presbyteries be instructed to forward yearly an assessment of two cents per church-member to the Treasurer of the Assembly, to constitute a Supplemental Contingent Ex-

* *Minutes G. A. 1875*, p. 469; *1878*, p. 227; *1879*, p. 607.

† See p. 249.

pense Fund. This fund shall be disbursed from year to year by the Committee of Arrangements, and be used for the purpose of meeting the expense of entertaining such commissioners as are not otherwise provided for; and that the Treasurer be authorized to pay the account of the Committee of Arrangements after it has been approved by the Finance Committee of the Assembly."* This is often called the Entertainment Fund. The apportionment for this fund for 1882 is one and one-half cents per communicant.†

Has a church court the power to assess a tax upon the churches?

"None of our church courts are clothed with power to assess a tax upon the churches. Apportionments to meet the expenses of the several bodies may be made, but the payment depends upon that voluntary liberality which flows from the enlightened consciences of the people, who may confidently be relied upon to return whatever is necessary for the conduct of our ecclesiastical business." If the Presbyteries choose to pay only the expenses of their own commissioners, "the Assembly cannot require them to contribute to the general fund." Yet "each Presbytery is hereby earnestly requested to contribute annually its full proportion for the Commissioners' and Contingent Funds of the General Assembly."‡

Can a claim for mileage be made after the adjournment of the General Assembly?

The Assembly only can act upon such a claim. In 1878 a commissioner from the Presbytery of Santa Fé, who had been in the previous Assembly, presented a claim for $154 due him since last year from the Mileage

* *Minutes G. A. 1877*, pp. 545, 570. † *Ibid., 1881*, p. 581.
‡ *Ibid., 1878*, pp. 67, 68.

Fund, and the Assembly instructed the Treasurer to pay it."*

What is done with the balances of the Mileage and Entertainment Funds?

The balances of the Mileage Fund and of the Entertainment Fund are paid to the Treasurer of the General Assembly, and go to the account of the next year.†

Do commissioners receive the printed Minutes?

"Every Minister and every vacant church contributing to this fund (Mileage Fund) connected with the Presbyteries, thus complying with the provisions of this plan, shall be entitled to a copy of the annual Minutes of the General Assembly."‡ In 1880 the Assembly Resolved, "That the Stated Clerk forward a copy of the printed Minutes to every Elder who is a commissioner in this Assembly, provided he forwards his P. O. address, and that the Presbytery which he represents has paid its quota to the Mileage Fund."§

* *Minutes G. A. 1878*, p. 100. † *Ibid., 1880*, p. 73.
‡ *Pres. Dig.*, p. 473. § *Minutes G. A. 1880*, p. 85; *1881*, p. 553.

APPENDIX.

CONTAINING THE DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLIES OF 1882 AND 1883.

ADDENDA.

To p. 31 : **Multiplication of churches.**

" It is inexpedient and contrary to the expressed spirit of the Church to multiply church organizations in any field already well supplied with gospel privileges, and especially so when the churches occupying the field are closely related to us in doctrine and polity. . . . We think it unwise, and a waste of the means and power of the Church, to organize separate churches when the persons desiring such organizations are not only few in number, but may be supplied with church privileges by existing Presbyterian churches." *

To pp. 31, 33, 199: **May an Evangelist organize churches and ordain Ministers in a foreign field?**

" Under the existing law of the Church, Presbyteries only are competent to ordain Ministers; and the Assembly also judges that churches organized in foreign missionary-fields, where no Presbytery exists, may, with the

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 96.

consent of the Synod, be enrolled by the Presbytery to which the Missionary on the field belongs." *

To pp. 57, 285: **Are persons who do not accept the teaching of the Church regarding infant baptism eligible to the office of Ruling Elder or Deacon?**

"A faithful acceptance of the Confession of Faith is required of those who accept office in our churches; and if any cannot faithfully accept this Confession of Faith, they should decline office in the Church." †

To p. 58: **Resignation of Ruling Elder or Deacon.**

"The resignation should be to the Session; and it will take effect when accepted." ‡

To p. 70: **Term-Deacons.**

"The overture" ("Does chapter xiii., section viii., authorize a church to elect term-Deacons as well as term-Elders?") "be answered in the negative." ‡

To p. 75: **Book of Forms.**

"In view of the action of previous General Assemblies on this subject, and the liberty which belongs to each Minister to avail himself of the Calvinistic or other ancient devotional forms of the Reformed churches so far as may seem to him for edification, it is inexpedient for this General Assembly to make any special order in the premises." §

To pp. 79, 424: **Sabbath-School Hymnal.**

"That a collection of hymns suitable for use in meetings for social prayer and in the Sunday-school should be provided by the Presbyterian Church for use by its churches." The Board of Publication are directed to prepare and publish, as soon as practicable, such a hymn-book. ‖

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 96. † *Ibid.*, p. 98.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1883*, p. 626. § *Ibid.*, *1882*, p. 95.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

To p. 136: **Admission and Communion of Friends.**

"1. Can one be admitted to membership in the Presbyterian Church, who has not received water baptism in any mode, and who does not believe in other baptism than the baptism of the Holy Ghost? 2. If not, can such persons—*e. g.* Quakers—be invited to the Lord's table?" The Assembly answered the first question in the negative, and referred "the Presbytery to the Directory for Worship, chapter viii., section iv., in regard to the proper qualifications of communicants." *

To pp. 116, 220: **Discipline of other churches to be respected.**

"The Presbytery of Furrukhabad erred in receiving and restoring to the ministry the said —— while he was under sentence of deposition by the Presbytery of Saharanpur" (of the Reformed Presbyterian Church).† . . . "This Assembly directs the Presbytery of Furrukhabad to reconsider its action and proceed according to the requirements of the Constitution, as provided for the guidance of our Presbyteries in similar circumstances between themselves." ‡

To p. 142: **Dismissal of baptized members.**

"When parents, with their families, are dismissed to other churches, the names of the baptized children who have neither come to years of discretion nor become communicants should be embraced in the certificates given." §

To p. 148: **Communicants dropped from roll.**

Members of the Church withdrawing to connect themselves with other denominations are to be dropped from the roll, "the reasons thereof being recorded." §

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 627.
† See p. 530.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 628.
§ *Ibid., 1882*, p. 98.

To p. 152: **Communicants mistaken.**

"It is recommended that the names of persons who think themselves mistaken in their convictions be placed on the separate roll of members already provided by the Assembly, in the hope that new light will bring stronger convictions." *

To p. 159: **Session should appoint the Sabbath-school Superintendent.**

"The Assembly earnestly recommends the Sessions of all our churches, in the exercise of their right, to appoint the Superintendent, and maintain a careful and authoritative supervision of all the Sabbath-school work of their congregations and mission enterprises." *

"The General Assembly again emphasizes the duty of the church Session to exercise supervision over their Sabbath-schools, especially in the choice of officers and teachers." †

To p. 159: **Sabbath-school collections.**

"That Pastors and Sessions be urgently requested to maintain a careful supervision of the objects for which collections are made in the Sabbath-schools, and to secure their contributions to our own benevolent causes, giving due prominence to the Sabbath-school work of this Board" (Publication).* This was reiterated the next year.†

To p. 221: **Sessional records.**

"1. Does the right of 'General Review and Control' extend to statistical items of baptism and administration of the Lord's Supper, inserted for record and convenience of reference, in chronological order, between the minutes of actual proceedings?"

"2. Can the Presbytery pass rules for the conduct of

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, pp. 98, 49. † *Ibid., 1883*, p. 616.

church Sessions, and then take exceptions to the proceedings of church Sessions that are not according to said rules, when the rules are not prescribed by our Form of Government or Book of Discipline?"

Both these questions were answered in the negative.*

To p. 169: **Roll of baptized members.**

"Churches are urged to keep a full and permanent roll of all baptized children, and carefully to note their public confession of Christ, their passing beyond the watch and care of the Church, or their removal by death." †

To pp. 176, 257: **Presbytery formed beyond bounds of a Synod.**

The General Assembly, on petition of the Presbytery of Oregon, organized the Presbytery of Alaska, and ordered "that the boundaries of the Presbytery be coterminous with the Territory of Alaska, and that the Presbytery of Alaska be attached to the Synod of Columbia." *

To p. 207: **Probation of Ministers from Canada.**

"Inasmuch as the rule requiring such probation has been repealed as to Ministers from the Presbyterian churches of Great Britain, that the said rule be repealed as far as it relates to Ministers coming from the Presbyterian churches of Canada." ‡

To p. 213: **Interpretation of Article 3d in action (1881) regarding "unemployed Ministers and vacant churches."**

"Inasmuch as the action referred to has reference to funds contributed, not for the mission-work of the whole Church, but for the work within the bounds of the Presbytery contributing the funds, these funds are to be re-

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 631. † *Ibid., 1882*, p. 98.
‡ *Ibid., 1883*, p. 625.

turned in bulk to the Presbytery contributing them, to be distributed according to its direction. But this rule shall apply only to such special funds." *

To p. 215: **Name of suspended Minister to remain on roll.**

The decision of the O. S. Assembly in 1847 was affirmed in 1882, when the Assembly answered in the negative the question, "Is it proper to remove the name of a suspended member of the Presbytery from its roll and place it on a private register?" †

To pp. 31, 224: **Organization of churches.**

"Within the bounds of a Presbytery the work of the Board of Home Missions should be carried on in harmony with the Presbytery, according to the principles and rules hereinafter stated, but a discretion should be allowed to the Board in outlying districts, where direct presbyterial control is difficult or impracticable. . . . But in all questions touching the organization of churches or the character of Ministers, the Board, in case of difference between itself and the Presbytery, should abide by the final decision of the Presbytery. . . . No church shall be organized by a Missionary (of the Board) within the bounds of any Presbytery unless authority has been previously obtained from the Presbytery." ‡

To p. 226: **Statistical reports.**

"That the Stated Clerks of the Presbyteries indicate, in the statistical reports, the nationality of all churches in which services are held in a foreign language, by adding to or inserting in the name of a given church the customary national name of the persons worshiping therein." §

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 95 † *Ibid.*, p. 96.
‡ *Ibid., 1883*, pp. 643, 644. § *Ibid., 1882*, p. 18.

"That the statistics of the General Assembly, as found in the minutes of the same, be stereotyped for the use of this committee (on Benevolence), the statistics of each Presbytery to form a single page. That we accept the proposal of a member of this committee to print and circulate, at his own expense, for one year, copies of the statistics of each Presbytery as stereotyped, for circulation in each family of every church where the Pastor or Session will request the same. . . . These statistics will be sent to every Pastor or Session gratis, postage paid." *

To p. 226: **Temperance narratives.**

"That the Presbyteries prepare a distinct temperance narrative at their spring meetings, and forward the same to the Permanent Committee (on Temperance), and that this committee consider and report on the same to the next Assembly." †

To p. 226: **Tabulated statement-blanks.**

The blanks for tabulated statements of facts, ordered by the Assembly in 1880, were discontinued in 1883. ‡

To p. 233: **Consolidation of Synods.**

"In the judgment of the General Assembly the act of 1881, consolidating certain Synods, affects only their boundaries, so that at their first annual meeting, and to the close thereof, said Synods must be constituted as the Synods have uniformly been constituted heretofore. Should any Synod vote to become a delegated body, its decision shall be submitted to its Presbyteries, and shall take effect when ratified by a majority thereof. This result shall be ascertained at a subsequent meeting of the Synod, or, if the Synod so provide, the result shall be certified to the Moderator and Clerks of the

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 642. † *Ibid.*, p. 656.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 641.

Synod, and by them be communicated to the several Presbyteries, as a basis for electing delegates to the ensuing or second meeting." *

To pp. 235, 257: **Synod divided.**

The Synod of Colorado was divided into the Synod of Colorado and the Synod of Utah, the latter to consist of the Presbyteries of Utah, Montana and Wood River, and "from the Synod of Columbia and the Presbytery of Idaho" was transferred "to the Synod of Utah and the Presbytery of Wood River so much of the Territory of Idaho as lies east and south of the eastern and southern boundary of Idaho county, Idaho Territory." †

To p. 237: **Synod's place of meeting changed.**

The Synod of New York asked "the Assembly to acknowledge and authorize the regularity of a meeting of the Synod which was held at Peekskill in October, 1880, instead of Newburyport, according to previous adjournment. Reasons beyond the control of Synod made the change necessary, and the action of the Synod was unanimously approved by its own members." The action of the Synod was legalized. ‡

To p. 237: **Synod's time of meeting changed.**

At the request of two Presbyteries, the General Assembly changed the time of meeting of the Synod of Ohio "to avoid conflict with the time designated for the State election." ‡

To p. 239: **Complaint stopped at Synod.**

"The Judicial Committee are unable to find from the complaint that the decision of the Synod affects the doctrine or the constitution of the Church, nor can they find in the statement of the action of the Synod anything which

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 97. † *Ibid., 1883*, p. 630.
‡ *Ibid., 1882*, p. 95.

was not within their discretion; and therefore no case is presented which the Assembly can properly entertain and review." *

To p. 242: **Overtures to the General Assembly.**

"An overture coming from a private individual, instead of from a lower Church judicatory, should not be regarded as properly before the Assembly." † ("All overtures to the Assembly must come from Presbyteries or Synods.") ‡ "The General Assembly has decided that all overtures shall come to it through Presbyteries or Synods, and not through individuals or Sessions." §

To p. 243: **Synodical Home Missionary Committee.**

"Each Synod shall appoint a Home Missionary Committee, to consist of the chairmen of the presbyterial committees within its bounds. The committee shall meet annually, near or during the meeting of the Synod. It shall be the duty of the committee to ascertain, as nearly as possible, the whole number of churches and missionary-fields needing aid within the bounds of the Synod, and, as nearly as possible, equalize the salaries of Missionaries in the Presbyteries. They shall ascertain the amount it will be fair to expect for the work of Home Missionaries from the churches of the Synod, and, as nearly as possible, determine the amount of aid that will be likely to be asked for the support of missionary work within the bounds of the Synod. The committee shall confer, when practicable, with representatives of the Board. These synodical committees shall, as soon as possible after the meeting of the Synod, report to the Board the necessities of the fields and the probable

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 100.
† *Ibid.*, p. 57.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1876*, p. 78.
§ *Ibid.*, *1883*, p. 627.

amount of money required, together with the probable contributions from the Synods to the Board. The reports of the synodical committees shall be sent every year to the Assembly, and be referred either to a special committee or to the Standing Committee of the Assembly on Home Missions. The committee, after consulting the wants of the whole field, as they shall be set forth in the reports from the various Synods, shall make their report to the Assembly, with such recommendations as the exigencies of the work may seem in their judgment to require." The Board was instructed to conform its rules to this regulation.*

To pp. 233, 244: **Records of Synods which have been consolidated.**

"The Stated Clerks of the several Synods now consolidated in other Synods be directed to deposit the records of said Synods with the Stated Clerks of the Synods which are their legal successors." †

To p. 253: **Appeal received from Presbytery.**

Rev. W. W. McLane appealed from a decision of Presbytery directly to the Assembly, giving his reasons for so doing. The Judicial Committee reported that the reasons were not sufficient, and the papers be referred to the Synod. But the General Assembly required the same committee to prepare and issue the case for trial before the Assembly.‡

To p. 254: **Judicial Commissions.**

"Your committee further report that they have had under consideration the various propositions concerning the establishment of 'Judicial Commissions,' and in view of the great importance of the matter and the shortness of time for its consideration, they respectfully recommend that the

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 644. † *Ibid., 1882*, p. 94.
‡ *Ibid., 1883*, p. 597, 604, 617.

subject be referred to the next General Assembly, with a request that the propriety of establishing such commissions be carefully considered." This was adopted.*

To p. 264: **Saharanpur Presbytery.**

The Saharanpur Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Northern India asked the General Assembly to receive and place it under the care of the Synod of India, the Presbytery having dissolved its relation with the Reformed Church. The Assembly referred the matter, with power, to the Synod of India.†

To p. 268: **Delegates to the Third Council of the General Alliance.**

Twenty Ministers and twenty Ruling Elders, with their alternates, were appointed delegates to the Third Council of the General Alliance of the Reformed churches, which is to convene at Belfast, Ireland, June, 1884. ‡

To p. 271: **Presbyterian Church South.**

Telegraphic salutations were interchanged between the two Assemblies from 1877. In 1882 the following was received from the Moderator of the Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church:

"In answer to overtures from Presbyteries the following paper was adopted almost unanimously (three nays):

"'In order to remove all difficulties in the way of that full and formal fraternal correspondence which, on our part, we are prepared to accept, we adopt the following minute, to wit: "That, while receding from no principle, we do hereby declare our regret for and withdrawal of all expressions of our Assembly which may be regarded as reflecting upon or offensive to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America."

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 657. † *Ibid., 1882*, p. 98. ‡ *Ibid., 1883*, p. 579.

"'*Resolved*, That a copy of this paper be sent by telegraph to the General Assembly now in session at Springfield, Illinois, for their prayerful consideration, and, *mutatis mutandis*, for their reciprocal concurrence, as affording a basis for the exchange of delegates forthwith.'"

Our Assembly telegraphed in reply its action in the same words, *mutatis mutandis*, prefacing it with this resolution: "That in the action now to be taken we disclaim any reference to the action of preceding Assemblies concerning loyalty and rebellion, but we refer only to the action concerning schism, heresy and blasphemy."

The Southern Assembly replied, "If the action of the Assembly, telegraphed by your Moderator to our Moderator, does not modify the concurrent resolution adopted by your Assembly and ours, we are prepared to send delegates forthwith."

The Moderator was instructed to answer: "The action referred to does not modify, but it explains, the concurrent resolution, and the explanation is on the face of the action. There is nothing behind it nor between the lines. The dissolution of our Assembly is at hand. We may be ready for final adjournment this evening. Exchange of delegates is impossible before Tuesday. Shall we not each appoint delegates this day to visit the respective Assemblies next year? We await your answer with deep and prayerful interest."

The Southern Assembly replied:

"It was unanimously resolved—

"1. That this Assembly does hereby declare its entire satisfaction with the full and explicit terms in which the General Assembly in the United States of America has

expressed its reciprocal concurrence in the paper transmitted to our Assembly on fraternal correspondence.

"2. That we do unfeignedly rejoice and render thanksgiving to God in an event suited to take away the reproach of alienation between bodies holding the same standards of faith and order, and tending to bring peace to our borders.

"3. That inasmuch as it is impracticable at this late day to have an interchange of delegates, the Assembly does hereby appoint Rev. William Brown, D. D., Rev. Thomas A. Hoyt, D. D., Hon. B. M. Estes, principals, and —— alternates, to bear to the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America our cordial Christian salutations."

Rev. Samuel J. Niccolls, D. D., Rev. Thomas S. Hastings, D. D., Rev. Herrick Johnson, D. D., Rev. S. Irenæus Prime, D. D., Rev. Edward P. Humphrey, D. D., and Hon. William Strong and Hon. Samuel M. Moore, with alternates, were appointed delegates to the Southern Assembly.*

The delegates appeared, and were heartily welcomed at the Assemblies in 1883.†

In 1882, the Assembly recommended "that the utmost care be exercised" by the Board of Home Missions "to avoid all conflict or attrition with the churches of our sister body in the Southern States, and that the work there be conducted in the spirit of the Christian union toward which we believe we are moving. We express our readiness also to co-operate with our Southern brethren on any fields and in any way that may help the progress of the cause so dear to us both." ‡

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, pp. 50, 66, 83, 102, 103.
† *Ibid., 1883*, pp. 576, 596. ‡ *Ibid., 1882*, p. 38.

In 1883 the following resolution was adopted:

"Whereas, Fraternal relations between the two great branches of the Presbyterian Church in the United States have been happily established, and for the purpose *now* of securing, as far as may be possible, the cordial co-operation of these two great Christian bodies in all works and measures in which they have a common interest for building up the Redeemer's kingdom; therefore be it

"*Resolved*, That a committee of seven be appointed by this General Assembly to confer with a similar committee, if it shall be appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, now in session in Lexington, Kentucky, in regard to any plans or methods of co-operation in any part of the great work that the Master has laid upon his servants, and which it might appear would be more effectively accomplished by cordial and friendly co-operation than by separate and independent action; and that these committees report the result of their deliberations to their respective Assemblies of 1884." *

To p. 276: **Revision of Book of Discipline.**

In 1882 it was "*Resolved*, That the consideration of the report of the Committee on the Revision of the Form of Government and Book of Discipline be postponed until the next Assembly, and that the printed report be sent down to the Presbyteries for their consideration and examination, and that the Stated Clerk be instructed to send a copy to every Minister and church Session." †

In 1883 the report was carefully examined, and, "as amended and harmonized, was then unanimously adopt-

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 591. † *Ibid., 1882*, p. 52.

ed, and the Revised Book of Discipline, with the revision of chapter x. of the Directory for Worship, was ordered to be sent down to the Presbyteries by the Stated Clerk for their consideration as an overture." And it was "*Resolved*, That the proposed revision of the Book of Discipline and of chapter x. of the Directory for Worship be overtured to the Presbyteries for their adoption as a part of the constitution of the Church in place of the existing Book of Discipline and the existing chapter x. of the Directory for Worship; and that the Presbyteries be directed to vote *aye* or *no* upon the proposed substitution as a whole; with the *proviso*, that any Presbytery, voting in the affirmative, may have the privilege of excepting from the revision any section or sections from which it may dissent, and may by overture recommend a further revision of the same; and that the Stated Clerks of Presbyteries be required to transmit the results of their action to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, on or before the first day of the meeting of the next Assembly." *

To p. 276: **Assembly Hall.**

A committee of three was appointed "to consider the question of a permanent place and of an Assembly Hall for the annual meetings of the General Assembly," and to report to the next Assembly.†

To pp. 56, 283: **Electors of Ruling Elders.**

The Assembly was asked for a definition of the word "congregation" in the chapter prescribing the manner of electing Ruling Elders, and answered: "The term 'congregation' includes only the actual communicants of the particular church (*Digest*, p. 342)." ‡

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, pp. 657, 658–673, 685.
† *Ibid.*, p. 672. ‡ *Ibid., 1882*, p. 97.

To p. 297: **Term-Elder.**

"When from necessity there can be but one Elder for the time being, he may be elected for three years, as provided in chapter xiii., section viii., and re-elected at the end of that term; and the division into classes as provided in that section should take place as the Session can be increased in number." *

To p. 298: **Reinstallation of term-Elders.**

"It was the evident intention of the last Assembly to recommend the reinstallation of Elders, when re-elected; and, to make its intention more definite, the Assembly hereby strikes out of the previous action the phrase 'or in some way equivalent thereto.'" †

To p. 310: **Scholarships.**

"It is exceedingly desirable that the appropriations of the Board and the scholarships of the seminaries and colleges should be the same in amount and rules of appropriation, and that the Church should aim to secure, as soon as possible, a sufficient number of endowed scholarships to supply the needs of the candidates. In order to do this, we would recommend that the Board of Education invest the permanent funds in its charge, amounting to $43,950, in scholarships yielding each $200 a year, with the design of increasing them to $250 as soon as practicable; these scholarships to be given to students whose grade of scholarship is high, and who do not receive aid from any other source.

"It is also recommended that the sums received from time to time, refunding the amounts given in aid in former years, and also the larger bequests to the Board of Education, be set aside by the Board for the increase of the permanent scholarships, as above described.

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 626. † *Ibid., 1882*, p. 98.

"It is also recommended that the whole Church be called upon to raise, by gifts of individuals, churches or Presbyteries, permanent scholarships of $5000 each in connection with the Board of Education, the various theological seminaries or Presbyterian colleges, in accordance with the preference of the donors." *

But the next year it was "*Resolved*, That the General Assembly approves the reasons of the Board for omitting to divide the Permanent Fund into distinct scholarships, yielding larger amounts, to be given to students whose grade of scholarship is high." †

To p. 313: **Princeton Theological Seminary.**

"The Board of Directors solicits the sanction of the General Assembly to two changes in the 'Plan of the Seminary,' viz.: The omission from article ii., section iii., of the words 'and the President, or, in case of his absence, one of the Vice-Presidents, be one.' Also in article ii., section v., the change of the word 'twenty' to 'ten.' The effect of the former change would be to enable the Board more easily to secure a quorum; that of the latter, to require one-half the length of notice for a special meeting." This was granted. ‡

To p. 313: **Danville Theological Seminary.**

Certain Ministers and members of the Southern Presbyterian Church residing in Kentucky memorialized the Assembly "to transfer the property and endowments of the Danville Theological Seminary, with the exclusive control of that institution, in perpetuity or for a term of years, to the Church of which they are members." Overtures from two of the three Presbyteries of the Synod of Kentucky protested against such transfer.

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 63. † *Ibid.*, *1883*, p. 622.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1882*, p. 87.

The Assembly "*Resolved*, That, should a committee be appointed by the Southern Assembly at Lexington, Ky., to confer with the committee already appointed by this body in regard to co-operative work by the two branches of the Church, the question of the joint occupancy of the Danville Seminary should be made a matter of consideration by the committees in conference." *

To p. 314: **Seminary of the North-west.**

A new section was added to article ii. of the constitution of the seminary, as follows: Section ii., "In just recognition of his relations of beneficence to this seminary, Cyrus H. McCormick is hereby constituted, from this time forth, a special member of the Board of Directors, to qualify as, and to be entitled to all the prerogatives of, other full members of the Board, and to continue in the office during the term of his natural life or until he shall resign." †

To p. 316: **Instruction in seminaries.**

"That in view of the activity of the adherents of Independency and Prelacy in the dissemination of their views of the Church and its polity, and in view of the grave constitutional and administrative questions in our Church needing intelligent discussion and settlement, the Assembly advises the seminaries under its care to give more attention to thorough and systematic instruction on the constitution and polity of the Presbyterian Church.

"That in view of the necessity for combining the most thorough instruction with the best training, we suggest to the seminaries the propriety of co-operating with Presbyteries in having the months of the seminary session assiduously devoted to study, and the months of

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, pp. 683–685. † *Ibid., 1882*, p. 89.

vacation devoted to Christian work, under the special supervision of Pastors and Presbyteries.

"That in view of the importance of a thorough command of the Bible in the original tongues, we urge that greater stress be laid in our seminaries upon a thorough acquaintance with the Bible in the original Hebrew and Greek, and that a creditable examination in the Greek of the New Testament be required of every graduate of a college as a condition to being received into our theological seminaries." *

To p. 316 : **Higher criticism.**

"That in view of the crude and dangerous utterances of many of the secular and religious papers, periodicals and books, and of some of the pulpits of the land, resulting from the introduction and prevalence of German mysticism and 'higher criticism,' and of philosophic speculation and so-called scientific evolution; in view of the alarming defection from the faith of the gospel both in this country and abroad, and which seriously threatens our own beloved Church; and in view of the fact that the revealed word of God, the Holy Scripture, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and therefore the only hope of mankind,—your committee recommend that this Assembly, in the name of the Great Head of the Church, solemnly warn all who give instruction in our theological seminaries against inculcating any views or adopting any methods which may tend to unsettle faith in the doctrine of the divine origin and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures held by our Church or in our Presbyterian systems of doctrine, either by ignoring or depreciating the supernatural element in divine revelation, or by exalting human conjecture and specula-

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 91; *1883*, p. 682.

tion above historical and divine facts and truths, or by applying hypotheses of evolution, unverified and incapable of verification, to the word of the living God." This was adopted.*

"The General Assembly feels constrained to express itself clearly and decidedly on the rationalistic treatment of the Holy Scriptures by Protestant teachers in Europe, whose works are introduced into our country, and whose evil influence is felt in our Church. Our Confession of Faith (chapter i., section ii.), after giving the names of the books of the Old and New Testaments, adds, 'all which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.' The denial of the authenticity or truthfulness of the Holy Scriptures is a denial of their inspiration; and any teaching that suggests such denial should be not only carefully avoided, but studiously repelled. The Assembly would not discourage the full use of all light in critical study, nor does it assume that any erroneous teaching is welcomed or offered within the bounds of the Church; but it would warn all Pastors and teachers of the danger to young and inexperienced minds in the free use of crude theories and unproved speculations on the part of religious instructors, and would remind them of the paramount importance of sustaining in positive doctrine the authenticity, integrity, truthfulness and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures against the unsanctified learning by which an unbelieving world, through nominally Christian channels, assaults the Church of God.

"The Assembly would also remind the Presbyteries of their special responsibility as guardians of the faith, and that in view of the apprehensions excited through-

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 92.

out the Church by the rationalistic handling of the word of God, it is incumbent upon them to see to it that the appropriate constitutional action be taken, if at any time it should become manifest that any Minister of our Church was promulgating theories of dangerous tendency or contra-confessional doctrine concerning the Holy Scripture." *

To p. 397: **Board of Home Missions and applications.**

"The Board should not, in ordinary cases, decline to grant an appropriation recommended by a Presbytery, unless in its judgment, after viewing the whole field to be supplied, it shall appear that the funds at its disposal are all needed for more deserving or more promising work; and whether it does thus appear must be determined by the Board." (See page 524.) †

To p. 398: **Board of Home Missions and Presbyteries.**

The committee instructed to report in 1882 did so, presenting majority and minority reports. These were considered, and referred back to the committee to report the next year. Their report was adopted, the substance of which is given on this page and on page 524.‡

To pp. 243, 398: **Synodical Missionaries.**

In 1881 the Assembly approved of the action of the Board of Home Missions employing superintendents of missions, especially on the frontier, in co-operation with Synods and Presbyteries within their bounds. They were called supervisory Missionaries, and later synodical Missionaries.§ "Synodical Missionaries should hold to the Board the same relation as other Missionaries whose support is provided, in whole or in part, by the Board,

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 631. † *Ibid.*, p. 644.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1882*, pp. 35, 51; *1883*, pp. 643, 644.
§ *Ibid.*, *1881*, p. 534.

and their work shall be conducted in harmony with the interests of the Synod and of the Board." *

To p. 422: **Missionary Department of Board of Publication.**

The special committee appointed in 1881 reported the next year, and their report was adopted; which was, in brief—

1. That the Board maintain "a separation, as complete as practicable, between the publishing and the colportage departments in their business affairs, so that the relation between the two, in this respect, shall be the same as between the publishing department and any other purchaser."

2. That the publishing department "be not required to assume, in whole or in part, the support of any office or agency which it does not feel justified in assuming because of its commercial value."

3. That the annual report shall be "in such a manner that it shall be made to appear (1) whether any reduction in the price of its publications is practicable, and (2) what sum this department (of Publication) may yield, year by year, for Sabbath-school work and colportage or other missionary purposes."

4. That colporteurs shall be selected and supervised by the Corresponding Secretary and a committee of the Board. No colporteur shall be sent to any Presbytery without its consent.

5. That the office of superintendent of missionary-work be abolished. "District superintendents, also, are not to be maintained by the Board, except where it judges that they are called for on business grounds, in which cases they are to be sustained by the publishing department."

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 644.

6. That the Missionary department be sustained by contributions from the churches, and from these funds shall be provided the salary of the secretary of the Sabbath-school work, part of that of the Corresponding Secretary, salaries of colporteurs, grants, etc.

7. That the work of the colporteur be chiefly religious visitation and Sabbath-school work among the *destitute*, and the selling of books be subordinate.

8. That correspondence through the missionary department be invited with Pastors and Missionaries, to secure a wider diffusion of literature.*

The General Assembly in 1883 approved of "the proposed organization of the Board, through its secretary, of the Bible Correspondence School, in the interest of the better training of teachers." †

The second Sabbath of June was designated as CHILDREN'S DAY, "on which special services for the children shall be held, and the vital topics of the Christian nurture and the conversion of the young shall be pressed upon the thought of the entire congregation." †

To p. 421: **Depositories of Board of Publication.**

In 1882 the Assembly directed that depositories be established at Chicago and St. Louis. This was done, and arrangements for the sale of the Board's books were made with booksellers in New York, Syracuse, Detroit, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati.‡

To p. 423: **Colporteurs of Board of Publication.**

General Assembly approved of "the use of the term *colporteur* for that of *Missionary*." §

To p. 444: **Board of Church Erection.**

"That the Assembly give to the Board authority to

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, pp. 73–80. † *Ibid., 1883*, p. 616.
‡ *Ibid., 1882*, p. 48; *1883*, p. 613. § *Ibid., 1882*, p. 48.

petition the legislature to abbreviate its corporate name, which is considered unnecessarily long, and which, from mistakes liable in recording it, endangers the Board's legal claim to legacies intended for it; that similar authority be given to the Board to petition the legislature to be allowed to increase its Permanent Fund from $150,000 to $250,000.*

"While we would not deny the Christian liberty of churches and individuals in the distribution of their donations, we must disapprove and discourage the too frequent practice of diverting from the general treasury to special objects the annual contributions of churches for the Board, particularly when the Board has made liberal grants to the same objects." †

To pp. 451, 469: **Ministerial support.**

The resolution presented in 1881 was considered the next year, and referred to a committee of five Elders to report in 1883, when the Assembly placed all the papers in the hands of two Ministers and three Elders, (1) "to devise some plan . . . to secure a sum by which, under the approval of his Presbytery, at least $300 shall be given to each Minister who is either disabled from preaching or honorably retired;" (2) "to devise some plan by which a widows' and orphans' fund shall be created from which to secure some support to the families of deceased Ministers." (3) In the mean time, the churches are urged to contribute more liberally to the Board of Ministerial Relief.‡

To p. 451: **Home for disabled Ministers.**

Dr. Alexander M. Bruen donated to the Board of Ministerial Relief the mansion and grounds of the Bruen es-

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 81. † *Ibid., 1883*, p. 634.
‡ *Ibid., 1882*, p. 83; *1883*, pp. 575, 619, 635.

tate at Perth Amboy, N. J., "as a home for disabled Ministers and the widows and orphans of deceased Ministers of the Presbyterian Church." *

To p. 461: **Committee of Missions for Freedmen.**

"The committee are hereby authorized to apply to the proper civil authorities in Pennsylvania for a charter under a corporate name to be suggested by the committee." Acting under this resolution, the committee has been incorporated under the name of "The Presbyterian Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." †

To p. 411: **The Board of Aid for Colleges and Academies.**

The special committee on the functions of the Board of Education, which had been continued since 1877, reported again in 1882. The committee was continued and enlarged, and three overtures were submitted to it asking for the establishment of schools and colleges under the care of the Church.‡

The next year the committee presented a full report, stating the history of the movement, the importance and need of establishing and aiding schools and colleges under the supervision of the Church, and proposed definite action in the matter, which was adopted by the Assembly, viz.:

"1. That a definite agency be instituted that shall have in charge the interests of higher education as connected with the Presbyterian Church.

"2. That this agency be a separate and independent Board, with its distinct officers and work.

"3. That the Board be constituted under the following provisions, viz.:

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, p. 580. † *Ibid.*, *1882*, p. 32; *1883*, p. 592.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1882*, pp. 40, 58, 92.

A. The name of this Board shall be 'The Presbyterian Board of Aid for Colleges and Academies,' and the general work shall have the limitations indicated by its title.

B. The Board shall consist of twenty-four members, divided into three classes, composed equally of Ministers and laymen, and one class shall be elected each year.

C. The officers of this Board shall be a president, vice-president, treasurer and permanent secretary.

D. In the constitution of this Board the different parts of the country shall be equitably represented.

E. The head-quarters of the Board shall be at Chicago, and the executive committee of the Board shall be residents in Chicago or in the immediate vicinity.

F. Meetings of the Board may be held at different points in the country as the Board shall elect.

G. The province of the Board shall be to secure an annual offering from the churches for this cause; to co-operate with local agencies in determining sites for new institutions; to decide what institutions shall be aided; to assign to those institutions seeking endowment the special fields open to their appeals, that clashing between them may be avoided; and to discourage all independent appeals to the Church at large.

H. The funds received by the Board shall be devoted either to current expenses of struggling institutions or to permanent endowments.

I. (*a*) Every institution hereafter established, as a condition of receiving aid, shall be organically connected with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, or shall by charter provision perpetually have two-thirds of its board of control members of the Presbyterian Church.

(*b*) In case of institutions already established, and not included under the above provisions, appropriations for endowment shall be so made as to revert to the Board whenever these institutions shall pass from Presbyterian control.

(*c*) In all other respects the disbursement of funds by the Board shall be wholly discretionary with the Board, both as to amount and direction, subject always to the control of the General Assembly.

"4. That the Board be chartered under the laws of the State of Illinois and under the laws of such other States as may at any time hereafter, by said Board, be deemed necessary or advisable, and be empowered to receive legacies, bequests and devises.

"5. That a committee be now appointed to report to this Assembly the names of twenty-four members for this Board, and any needed directions for organization; and that when so reported and approved by this Assembly said members shall be authorized and enjoined to perfect the organization of the Board at the earliest possible date, and to proceed at once to its vast and responsible work." This was done.*

To p. 469: Sustentation.

The committee of fifteen, appointed in 1881 on the relations of the Presbyteries and Board of Home Mis-

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, pp. 581–590, 645.

sions, reported in 1883 that action on their part concerning sustentation was unnecessary, as "it is understood that the Board of Home Missions and some of the newly-organized Synods are endeavoring to determine a plan of sustentation." It was "*Resolved*, That this Assembly commend to the favorable consideration of the older Synods the suggestions of the Board of Home Missions in regard to sustentation;" which were: "The Board is of the opinion that this scheme could be made to meet all the expectations of its most sanguine friends if the Eastern Synods should see fit to adopt it for supplying their waning churches. . . . It would be well for the large and wealthy Synods of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and perhaps Michigan, Indiana and Illinois, to undertake the support of their own weak churches by special contributions called sustentation contributions. The money, as now, might be sent to the Treasurer of the Board, . . . but the Synods should dispose of it according to their own judgment, drawing out all they deposit. Without indicating how the details should be arranged, the Board is satisfied that the suggestion is worthy of the careful consideration of the Synods." *

To p. 472: Temperance.

The Assembly recommended the committee to the churches for contributions for the necessary expenses of the work.†

The Assembly declared it to be inexpedient to add to the subject of temperance that of the observance of the Sabbath, to be under the charge of this committee.‡

* *Minutes G. A. 1883*, pp. 644, 603, 753.
† *Ibid.*, *1882*, p. 106; *1883*, p. 656.
‡ *Ibid.*, *1883*, p. 656.

To p. 502: **Stated Clerks.**

"It is the judgment of the Assembly that it is within the province of the Stated Clerk to correct obvious errors and to supply evident omissions in the statistical reports sent up by the Presbyteries; it being understood, however, that changes shall be made only upon explicit official information." *

* *Minutes G. A. 1882*, p. 96.

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